



The Tourism Visa Project

**Increasing International Travel to the U.S.
through Improved Visa Process**



University of Minnesota
Humphrey School of Public Affairs
PA 8081 Capstone: Advocacy in the Public Interest
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Acknowledgements

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the chance to turn this project into a reality.

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biggest fans, and offer us our greatest support.

Thank you.

~ The Student Team



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Executive Summary

In January 2012, **President Obama** signed an executive order establishing visa and foreign visitor entry processing goals, requiring government agencies to “enhance and expedite travel” to the U.S. by foreign nationals, consistent with national security requirements. The order also detailed a variety of actions intended to increase levels of international travel and tourism to the U.S., many requiring the formation of cross-agency and cross-sector initiatives. One initiative included the establishment of the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness, which, in its National Travel and Tourism Report, set the ambitious goal of attracting and welcoming **100 million international visitors** annually by the end of **2021**.

To reach this mark, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce asked the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB), a private sector collaborative of the country’s tourism and hospitality leaders to examine a range of functions of the international travel process. A series of subcommittees was established, including the Visa Subcommittee, which was tasked with examining the U.S. visa issuance process and providing detailed recommendations for improvements. On behalf of the Visa Subcommittee, Carlson, a Minnesota-based international hospitality and travel company, in partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Center for Integrative Leadership, invited a team of Humphrey School of Public Affairs graduate students and Carlson School of business undergraduate students to collaborate on the research and writing of a letter recommending steps the U.S. government could take, and a report detailing the recommendations and laying out an advocacy plan. This report is a product of that effort.

By performing an internal system-analysis, the student team identified opportunities for improvements at the **administrative, legislative, and management** levels of the visa application and issuance process, and for bringing more countries into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The TTAB Visa Subcommittee and the student team collaboratively refined the recommendations, with input from U.S. State Department officials, and sent them to the Secretary of Commerce in a letter that forms part of this report.

Based on its research and analysis, the team recommends the following in order to improve the visa issuance system and enhance international travel to the U.S.:

Administrative Actions

- Increase maximum visa validity wherever possible
- Examine the metrics used to calculate the refusal rate
- Reduce the amount of documentation that applicants are required to provide
- Explore electronic submission and translation of personal documents
- Implement technological updates that allow for the discontinuance of foil stickers
- Develop an algorithm to determine the effect of application fee on travel
- Continue VWP reciprocity negotiations Poland and Brazil
- Expedite the electronic interview system/videoconferencing pilot study
- Explore the creation of U.S. Consular “Videoconferencing and Visa Hubs”
- Develop travel forecasting tools to support efficiency and resource allocation

Legislative Actions

Support the “Jobs Originated through Launching Travel” (JOLT) Act

Support “The Border, Security, Economic Opportunity, Immigration Modernization Act”

Support the Subnational Visa Waiver Program Act

Separate the biometric exit system from increasing the VWP refusal rate

Consular Management Actions

Standardize the collection of customer service data and best practices

Adopt best practices as provided by the Bureau of Consular Affairs

Enhance the experience for customers waiting to interview

Implement digital language translation tools to assist applicants

Pursue market survey information regarding traveler perceptions and experience

Publicly communicate the improvements made to consular and visa services

This report details the recommendations developed for the letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, explores the research supporting the recommendations provided, and outlines an advocacy platform that supports the future policy and stakeholder engagement efforts necessary to implement the recommended improvements to the visa system.

Out of the President’s Executive Order came a vision to increase international travel to the U.S. This report is evidence of that vision and of a larger call for cross-sector collaboration - one which has already brought together officials from the U.S. State Department and leaders from the private sector - in order to reach the travel goals established in the National Travel and Tourism Report.

As former Vice President, Hubert H. Humphrey, once said:

“When you bring together government and the private sector in partnership and cooperation, you begin to feel the real impact or the real strength of a country.”

- Hubert H. Humphrey

It is with this spirit that we move forward...

INTRODUCTION

Mr. and Mrs. Wu travel from China to the United States every few years to visit relatives. Mr. Wu also travels to the United States each year for business. As a whole family, however, they have found it more and more difficult to visit the U.S. as their children have gotten older. Their teenagers are very involved in school and sports and rarely are able to take the several days needed to make the trip to one of the five U.S. consulates in China - a requirement for obtaining a visa. The Wu family's biggest complaint has been, that no matter what, they have had to reapply for a visa every year because the visa validity for Chinese citizens wanting to travel to the U.S. was just one year.

Historically, this was a huge deterrent for Chinese travelers wanting to come to the United States, but at the time of this report's writing, the validity for Chinese visas to the U.S. was extended from 12 to 120 months. This length of validity is now comparable to that enjoyed by citizens of most other countries who need a visa for travel to the U.S. This change was critical in improving the U.S. travel industry's capture of the Chinese international travel market, which is increasing significantly year after year. The change in validity is important because it makes it easier for Chinese travelers and thus makes the U.S. a more attractive and accessible destination.

This story reflects one of several potential obstacles faced by many international travelers wanting to visit the U.S. Improvements to the visa application process such as the one detailed above are crucial to increasing the number of international visitors visiting the U.S. as envisioned in President Obama's 2012 Executive Order.



SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

The background information in the section that follows provides a better understanding of the issues, challenges, and opportunities surrounding increased international travel to the U.S. It is our intention that this information set the stage for our recommended improvements to the U.S. visa processing system as detailed later in this report.

Situation Analysis

In a world in which information and images are shared in a matter of seconds, people across the world are more globally aware and connected to other cultures than at any previous time in history. From economics to social movements and pop-culture, the interconnectivity of nations is stronger than ever. With new levels of connection and awareness comes a heightened demand for global travel. People are in search of satisfying curiosity, whether it be for business, government, personal, or spiritual reasons.

Increased international travel to the U.S. brings numerous economic, cultural and diplomatic benefits. Tourism and travel-related spending in the U.S. by foreign visitors is classified as an export, accounting for 8 percent of total U.S. exports, and nearly 26 percent of service exports. On average, each overseas visitor to the U.S. spends \$4,500 per visit on hotels, restaurants, shopping, and other local businesses. In total, the travel and tourism industry directly supports over 8 million American jobs.¹

To facilitate growth in this industry, President Obama, through his 2012 Executive Order, launched the National Travel and Tourism Strategy. This strategy, designed to make the U.S. a more attractive and accessible destination, calls for increasing international visitors to the U.S. to 100 million by 2021. As a part of this mandate, significant improvements to the visa issuance process have already been made, including a significant reduction in consulate wait times. As a result of these efforts and other economic factors, international visitors to the U.S. rose to 69.8 million in 2013, from 66.7 million in 2012, increasing the economic impact of tourism by 9% to \$181 billion.²

Visiting a U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a visa is the crucial first step in planning a trip to the U.S. for many international travelers, as most visa applications require an in-person interview. On average, 98 percent of visa appointments occur within 3 weeks of the application completion date. However, there are more improvements to be made regarding the visa processing system. By making the process of securing a visa easier for qualified travelers, the U.S. is likely to see an increase in international travelers. As the U.S. public seeks to improve the state of the economy without an increase in government spending, instituting policy changes that improve the visa issuance process more broadly will increase international travel to and international spending in the U.S., contributing positively to the U.S. economy and trade account.

¹ Washington Diplomat. Retrieved from, https://www.washdiplomat.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10566:national-tourism-strategy-aims-to-make-visiting-us-easier&-catid=1520:july-2014&Itemid=546

² Ibid.

The Case for Action

As explained above, increased international travel to the United States provides tremendous benefits to the economy – in terms of jobs, exports, and travel and entertainment-related businesses across the country. However, increased international travel also represents positive impacts in the form of both cultural and political benefits, such as increased contact among nations that can enhance diplomacy and improve international relations. In our research, we found that, as the U.S. continues to work collaboratively with countries to identify ways to reciprocally increase international travel, it can also address issues of travel security on new and expanded levels. Culturally speaking, increased international travel represents an opportunity to bring the world to the U.S. In universities and communities across the country, a greater awareness of the diversity of cultures is achieved when we open our doors to travelers and share these global and cultural learning experiences.

While international visitors to the U.S. had a \$181 billion economic impact last year, the number of international travelers coming to the U.S. was only 6.4% of the worldwide market, down from 7.5% in 2000. As stated in the National Travel and Tourism Strategy, “While the United States set records for international visitation in four of the last five years, the global travel market has become increasingly competitive. Other countries actively market themselves, and new destinations are aggressively competing for market share.”¹ As the International Air Transport Association (IATA) explains, “International passenger numbers are expected to rise from 952 million in 2009 to 1.3 billion passengers in 2014. This 313 million traveler increase reflects a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.9%.”² With more international travelers entering the market each year, there is tremendous room for growth in international travel to the U.S.

Considering the growing worldwide market and the benefits related to international travel to the U.S., efforts must be made to capture a larger share of this growing market. By collaboratively addressing issues with leaders from both public and private sectors, the U.S. can grow its travel and tourism related industries, thereby stimulating economic activity, creating jobs, facilitating cultural exchange and global connectedness, and improving diplomacy and bilateral relations, among many other widespread benefits. The benefits of increased international travel to the U.S., along with costs, are explored in detail in Section 4 of this report.

The global race for international travelers is on. The time for collaborative action is now.

“As a travel destination, no other nation can compete with the diversity of experiences found across the United States and its territories, with its public lands, waters, and iconic cultural and historic sites.”

- National Travel and Tourism Strategy

¹ National Travel & Tourism Strategy | Task Force on Travel & Competitiveness. Retrieved from. <http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/national-travel-and-tourism-strategy.pdf>

² IATA - Industry expects 800 Million More Travelers by 2014. Retrieved from. <http://www.iata.org/pressroom/pr/pages/2011-02-14-02.aspx>

Capstone Project and Process

This report was prepared by a team of graduate public policy students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and undergraduate students from the Carlson School of Management working in partnership with Carlson, a global hospitality and travel company, in its role as an organizational member of the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) Visa Subcommittee. Charged with the task of providing recommendations to improve the visa processing system as a way to increase international travel, Carlson partnered with the Humphrey School and the Center for Integrative Leadership (CIL) to develop a graduate Capstone project under the direction of Professor Steve Kelley and Dr. Mary Curtin, the Humphrey School's Diplomat-in-Residence and a former State Department Official. The Humphrey students and two undergraduate Carlson School students worked closely with the client, Carlson, as well as the TTAB Visa Subcommittee, in researching and developing private sector recommendations for visa system improvement (including the Visa Waiver Program), drafting the Subcommittee's formal letter of recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce, and outlining an advocacy plan for promoting implementation of those recommendations.

As detailed on the International Trade Administration website, "The [TTAB] Board, established in 2003, serves as the advisory body to the Secretary of Commerce on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States. Its members represent a broad cross-section of the industry, including transportation services, financial services, and hotels and restaurants, as well as a mix of other small and large firms from across the country." The Secretary of Commerce appoints members of TTAB for two-year terms. Most recently, the Board has worked with Federal agencies to implement the travel and tourism initiatives stemming from the President's 2012 Executive Order and the National Travel and Tourism Strategy.

As requested by Secretary of Commerce, Penny Pritzker, TTAB's Visa Subcommittee undertook the task of producing a set of recommendations for improving the visa issuance process as part of the effort to meet the President's tourism goals, and to establish the U.S. as a leader in international travel practices. The student team's task was to conduct research that would inform the process and collaboratively develop and put into writing the recommendations to be provided Secretary Pritzker, via the Visa Subcommittee and our client, Carlson.

In order to develop suggestions that the Visa Subcommittee could put forward as areas for improvements, the student team researched the current visa system, including the laws that underpin it, the policies that shape its implementation, and the management of the process by the Department of State. Traditionally positioned as a problem of efficiency in management, focused heavily on wait times for appointments and long lines outside consular sections, our research found early on that the visa system efficiency standards and processing goals established in 2012 by the Executive Order (such as appointment wait time) are being met, and in some cases, significantly exceeded. Accordingly, our research scope evolved to include more systemic issues that we found to be direct and indirect impediments to international travel to the U.S., including: issues of visa accessibility, traveler perception, customer service, the cost simply to apply for a visa, the fear of refusal, and the preparation commitment (in terms of time and money) required of a B1 or B2 (business or tourist) visa traveler, and statutory difficulties in adding new countries to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This research process represents an expansion from the traditional visa processing and efficiency problem, to a broader examination of U.S. visa-related travel impediments that may discourage even highly qualified travelers.

Following suit, our process in developing recommendations stemmed from the understanding that it is not as much the number of visas processed, but the number of qualified applications that are not being submitted. This allowed us the opportunity to develop both innovative and collaboratively based recommendations - reflecting the organizational spirit of our client Carlson, and the TTAB Visa Subcommittee. Additionally, this research process helped prepare our student team for the main task - drafting the Visa Subcommittee's letter to Secretary Pritzker (see: Section 2) with specific recommendations for improving the overall process and for expanding the number of countries in the VWP. This research and drafting

process was done through extensive desktop research of comparative international travel trends, existing survey data on traveler perceptions, visa law, policy, and issuance statistics, all of which was informed and enhanced by a collaborative working relationship with officials from the U.S. State Department, and frequent conference call meetings of the Visa Subcommittee, in which the student team was invited to participate.

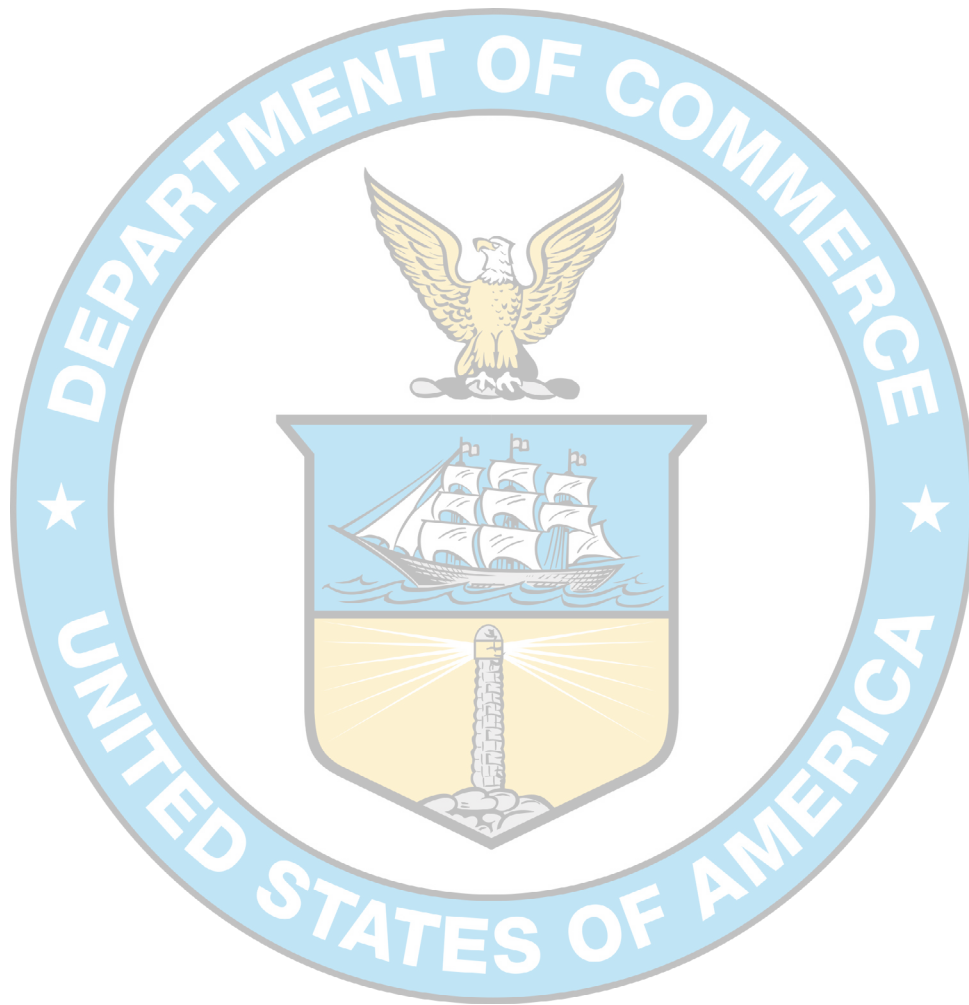
The first tasked requirement was the team's collaboration in the drafting of the letter from the Visa Subcommittee to Secretary of Commerce Pritzker. In the next section of the report, we include the final letter that was submitted to Secretary Pritzker on behalf of the TTAB Visa Subcommittee. This letter is a reflection of the student team research and collaboration with Carlson, the Visa Subcommittee, officials from the U.S. State Department, and other governmental partners. These recommendations, once received by the Department of Commerce, will inform the next phases of work related to President Obama's Executive Order and the National Travel and Tourism Strategy goal of reaching 100 million international travelers to the U.S. by 2021.

Following the letter, this report details the supportive research and evidence that informed our recommendations. We provide in depth research related to four emerging travel and tourism markets where we found significant opportunities for increased travel, external market considerations and best practices. Additionally, we share our research related to hospitality and make a case for its consideration in visa system improvement efforts.

Following the supportive research, we lay out the advocacy considerations necessary to take the next step in building the political and stakeholder support in implementing the visa system recommendations issued. This includes a five-step plan for strategy development and explores tactical recommendations for execution across this continuum.

SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

The Travel and Tourism Advisory Board - Visa Subcommittee:¹
Letter to Secretary Pritzker, U.S. Department of Commerce



¹ Department of Commerce Logo, retrieved from,
http://patriotspokenword.com/home/sites/default/files/patriotic/images/seals/2000px-US-DeptOfCommerce-Seal.svg_.png



UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

November 18, 2014

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker,

The United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (Board) is pleased to recommend enhancements to the visa processing system in response to President Obama's National Travel and Tourism Strategy. Earlier process improvements resulting from this mandate have dramatically reduced wait times for obtaining a U.S. visa. In 2013 over 92% of visa applicants worldwide were able to schedule appointments within three weeks of the application completion date.¹ In most cases, interviews occur within three days of the application date and are then processed and returned within 5 business days. The Board would like to commend the dedicated people at the State Department who helped increase international visitors to the U.S. to 69.8 million in 2013, increasing the economic impact of tourism by 9% to \$181 billion.²

As the competitive market for international travel continues to grow, it is imperative that we make continual improvements to all aspects of the international travel process in order to increase our global market share and establish the U.S. as a desired destination for many millions more travelers. Applying for a visa and visiting a U.S. embassy or consulate are crucial first steps for foreign nationals wishing to travel to the U.S. We believe that making this process more convenient and more efficient will increase international travel to the U.S. and improve the U.S. brand image. Further, as our nation seeks to improve our economy with less reliance on government spending, instituting changes that increase international travel become even more important -- as travel increases economic activity, creates jobs and improves the balance of trade.

Strategies for Achieving the National Goal of 100 million International Visitors

To meet the President's goal of 100 million annual international visitors to the U.S. by 2021, the Board is proposing a two-part strategy to improve the visa processing system:

- Increase the number of travelers who are 1) not subject to an in-person interview by giving greater discretion to the State Department to determine interview requirements and 2) not required to have a visa by expanding the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to additional countries that are willing and able to meet the program's statutory and policy requirements, entering into a close bilateral law enforcement and security partnership with the United States.

¹ INCREASING TOURISM TO SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH. (2014). Retrieved from The Executive Office of the President website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/travel_and_tourism_progress_report.pdf

² Ibid.

- Increase the U.S. market share of qualified visa applicants from key countries by making process and efficiency improvements to the visa system that will attract qualified international applicants who currently choose to travel elsewhere.

To develop recommendations, the Board performed an internal system-analysis and identified opportunities at the legislative, administrative, and management levels of the visa application and issuance process.

Furthermore, the Board identified four key countries (Poland, Brazil, China and India) where an increased focus on process improvements would maximize economic, cultural, and diplomatic benefits, while making significant progress towards achieving 100 million international visitors by 2021. The economic rationale supporting the private sector's prioritization of these countries is included in the addendum.

Through our research, we also found that a travel improvement plan must consider issues of visa necessity and accessibility, traveler perception, customer service, and other impediments such as the cost of visas, the fear of refusal, and the preparation commitment that is required to obtain a B1 or B2 visa, all while maintaining national security as a fundamental necessity. Moving forward, a set of solutions should allow for the processing of more visa applications, but also work to increase the United States' market share of international travel by reducing the real or perceived impediments qualified travelers face in the visa process.

Systemic Challenges and Recommended Solutions

While the core functions of the U.S. visa system are rooted in legislation and policy, it is the administrative layer that makes the system operational, and the management level that carries out the process at consular offices. We have identified several opportunities within each area to improve visa processing.

Administrative actions:

- Whenever possible, if legislation is not required, utilize administrative options to increase international travel to the U.S.
- Examine the metrics used to calculate the refusal rate to make sure it is accurately balancing our national security interests with promoting international visitation. The current metric $[\text{Refusals} \text{ minus } \text{Overcomes}] / [(\text{Issuances} + \text{Refusals}) - \text{Overcomes}]$ is susceptible to subjective decisions by different consular offices in different countries, which affects the number of visas granted. An additional factor considered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the State Department is the countries' visa-overstay rate; we recommend giving this metric additional weight.
- Increase maximum visa validity wherever possible by encouraging the Administration to continue aggressive dialogue to that end. We applaud the new bilateral agreement with China to extend the visa validity period from one year to 10 years for eligible travelers.
 - In addition to China, there are a number of medium sized countries that, taken together, could make a significant impact in increasing international travel to the U.S. These countries include Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia -- all of which currently have a visa validity duration of 60 months. Visa validity extensions represent a strategy that could be implemented without legislation. Doing so makes travel to the U.S. easier, and reciprocally benefits American travel to outside countries.

- In China and India, reduce the amount of documentation that applicants are required to present to Consular officers, or make the process easier by allowing for electronic submission and translation of personal documents so they can be reviewed before or without an in-person interview. This consideration is particularly useful in regards to providing evidence of financial support, the notarized offer of employment or evidence of assets and/or other bank related statements, and the requirement that all information provided on applications be submitted in English.
- Implement technological updates that would allow for the discontinuance of foil stickers, as was done by the Australian government. This would help speed up processing time and eliminate the expenses associated with transporting, storing, securing, and inserting the foil stamps, and the corresponding labor costs.
- Develop an algorithm to determine whether lowering the visa application fees would stimulate an increase in applicants, thus reducing a perceived financial impediment to travel. This would help determine a new cost of service model and the projected break-even point of reduced costs and increased applicants in order to adequately cover Consular Affairs operational costs, as mandated by Congress.
- Research the possibility of offering a “family” or group rate for visa fees. This could streamline processing and reduce the financial burden of international travel.

Administrative actions, with private sector support:

- Continue VWP reciprocity negotiations with the private sector’s top two priority countries, Poland and Brazil, to prepare them for acceptance into the VWP. Working with the DHS and the State Department, the Board commits to engage our local private sector partners in Poland and Brazil to encourage their governments meet the existing statutory and policy requirements for VWP designation by DHS.
 - Recognizing that there are national security, reciprocity and information sharing requirements, among others, associated with admitting countries into the VWP, the private sector also sees the economic benefit of continuing to bring new countries into the program and supports discussions with eight other countries that have expressed interest in VWP designation status. These include: Argentina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Israel, Malaysia, Romania, Turkey, and Uruguay (noting that both Argentina and Uruguay are prior members).
 - We also urge DHS and the State Department to identify next steps for future consideration of prospective countries including Croatia and South Africa.
 - In light of current and ongoing national security monitoring concerns, we also request that DHS and the State Department continue to inform Congress of the national security benefits to the U.S. inherent in the VWP program, including enhancements to passport security and data sharing that prospective VWP members must implement.
- Expedite the pilot and feasibility study needed for the implementation of an electronic interview system/ videoconferencing through collaboration between the private sector and the Department of State.
- As an alternative to in-person visa interviews, explore public and private sector partnerships to create U.S. Consular “Videoconferencing and Visa Hubs”, implemented in partnership with U.S. business interests operating internationally, potentially including hotel and resort companies and American Chambers of Commerce. There are already hubs processing U.S. nationals’ documents and one could be expanded to pilot accepting foreign nationals’ documents.

- o As globally-recognized U.S. hotel companies increasingly become the place where multinational corporations, diplomats, journalists, and others feel safe and secure conducting their business, adding a U.S. Visa office at international hotels (with headquarters in the U.S.) such as the Marriott in Hangzhou - population 2.45 million; the Radisson Blu in Chongqing - population 27.7 million; Hyatt Regency in Dongguan - population 8 million; Hilton in Shenzhen- population 7 million; or other U.S. Chain Hotels in major Chinese population centers could provide prospective travelers a secure internet and videoconferencing experience.

- o Note: The prior referenced hotels are just possible examples in large Chinese population centers and not meant to convey specific recommendations. Final selections would require clearance by the State Department and a willingness to meet the necessary security standards by the individual hotel property.

- Work with the Board's Data and Research Subcommittee to integrate public and private sector data, such as projections from large global travel management companies, to help the State Department forecast and prepare for changes in visa demand.

Legislative Actions, with Private Sector Support:

- Continue to support provisions in H.R. 1354, the "Jobs Originated through Launching Travel" (JOLT) Act.
- Separate the requirement that DHS create a biometric exit system from increasing the VWP refusal rate requirement from 3% to 10%. The linkage of the two issues led, in 2009, to the expiration of the law setting a 10% refusal rate threshold, and the return to the 3% threshold, keeping certain, otherwise qualified, countries out of the program to date.
- Support a House companion bill to S. 744, section 4103 - The Border, Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (passed by the Senate on 6/27/2013), which gives the Secretary of State broader authority to waive interviews for low-risk persons in the national interest.
- Support legislation to add qualified travelers to the VWP such as the bipartisan Subnational Visa Waiver Program Act, supported by U.S. Senators Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), Mike Lee (R-Utah). The bill grants the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to consider subnational territories and regions currently treated separately under U.S. law for participation in the VWP.
 - o This could include Hong Kong and Macau in China and the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands in the U.K. Hong Kong and Macau passport holders already have visa-free access to Canada, the European Union and over 100 countries around the world.

Consular Management Actions:

There are several opportunities to further improve consular operations on the front-line, which is the only time customers/travelers have a human interaction with a U.S. official as they navigate the visa system. In this sense, the consular management is the "face of the system" that defines the perceptions and consumer experience of international travelers. The following recommendations may improve customer experiences and bolster the image of the U.S. as a travel destination.

- Collect and analyze traveler feedback in the development of customer service best practices by opening a feedback loop with travelers/customers at each embassy or consulate. While many consular sections do this on a local level, we suggest making this a standard practice with reporting protocol.

- Improve the experience for customers waiting to interview, including continued improvements to queuing systems and making Brand USA destination marketing materials readily available in the consular waiting areas.
- To encourage visits from persons with a first language other than English, implement digital language translation tools to assist applicants in meeting the requirement that all information provided on visa applications be submitted in English.
- Encourage the adoption of best practices provided by the Bureau of Consular Affairs' leadership, management, and innovation committee, 1CA. Several key advancements and tools for evaluating consular performance have been developed. Enhance the existing communications protocol to broadly share best practices and encourage the use of 1CA tools to improve service.

Consulate Management Actions, with support from the Private Sector and Brand USA:

- In conjunction with Brand USA, pursue market survey information regarding the perception and brand image of the U.S. as a travel destination, and front-line customer service experiences, with an analysis of the impact of these perceptions on the individual's decision whether or not to travel to the U.S.
- Define a public and private sector communications strategy to improve the image and perception of consular and visa services. This could include adding messaging related to the ease of visa processing and minimal wait times such as "In 2013 92% of applicants worldwide were able to obtain appointments within three weeks" to appropriate Brand USA communications and education efforts and encouraging travel management companies to add this information to their marketing materials, websites and itineraries.

Conclusion

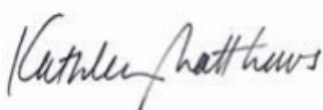
In closing, we recognize that many of the visa application and issuance processes we have suggested are aspirational, innovative and require further review by the State Department and DHS, and we are eager to further discuss, explore and assist in the development of these ideas. We believe that addressing these legislative, administrative and management barriers will provide meaningful progress toward achieving the goal of 100 million travelers to the U.S. by 2021. Further, a focus on Poland, Brazil, China and India is encouraged, as there will be significant future increases in international travelers from these countries. Improvements to accommodate travelers from these countries will be imperative to U.S. competitiveness in the international travel market.

We recognize the great achievements already made by the U.S. government in this area. We are grateful for the opportunity to build upon these earlier successes and ask that you consider our recommendations as ways to continue to improve the experiences of our international guests.

Sincerely,



Sam Gilliland
Chair



Kathleen Matthews
Vice Chair

Addendum to U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board Recommendations

November 18, 2014

Country Prioritization for VWP or other Process Improvements

The Board recommends these four key countries where the Department of State could focus its process improvement efforts. Our research identified that these markets represent the greatest opportunities for economic, cultural, and political benefit, while also contributing significant progress towards the President's goal of 100 million visitors to the U.S. in 2021.

Poland:

Poland has long been a strategic partner of the United States in Europe. A member of NATO, Poland has been a strong ally with U.S. forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Since shedding communism 25 years ago, Poland has seen its economy grow to 22nd in the world with a GDP of \$814 billion.¹ Its economy has been robust in the past several years. It was the only European economy not to decline in 2009 and has weathered the Euro crisis with above average growth rates. Poland is the only member of the Schengen area that is not part of the Visa Waiver Program. According to the Schengen agreement, U.S. citizens may enter Poland for up to 90 days for tourism or business purposes without a visa.

Of the 38 countries in the Visa Waiver Program, 29 are European. We recommend the U.S. work to get Poland into the VWP for diplomatic and cultural purposes. The Polish feel discriminated against compared to their neighbors, and the large Polish population in the U.S. would benefit from easier travel for their relatives.

In 2013, the U.S. processed 69,964 B1/B2 visa applications in Poland, and granted visas to 62,408 people, representing an 89.2% acceptance rate. This represents a 3.2% increase in visas issued over 2012.² Between the two U.S. consular sections in Poland, average wait times for a visa interview are one day. Of the 43.3 million Polish international travelers in 2011, the U.S. only received 0.14% of those,³ showing that there is room for significant growth in the market share of Polish international travelers.

Brazil:

The Board strongly advocates for the admittance of Brazil to the Visa Waiver Program. Brazil has established itself as one of the dominant emerging markets in the world and is the strongest economy in Latin America.

While wait times for visas have been reduced to just days, our research identified that the visa process is still burdensome to Brazilian travelers, impacting the U.S. market share. In a 2010 U.S. Travel Association survey of 500 travelers from Brazil, 70.2% of respondents planning to travel to the U.S. identified the distance required to travel to the consulate among the factors making the visa process most difficult.

Today, Brazilians are among the top spenders when traveling to the U.S. – as they rank fourth overall, and rank first among those countries not in the VWP. In 2013, the U.S. issued 925,678 B1/B2 visas in Brazil, with an overall refusal rate of 3.2%. Across the four U.S. consular sections in Brazil, wait times averaged an impressive two calendar days.⁴ However, of the 9.1 million international Brazilian travelers in 2013,⁵ 2.06 million visited the U.S.⁶ - dropping the U.S. total market share of Brazilian travelers from 26% in 2010, to 23% in 2013.

1 Poland's Top 10 Exports - World's Top Exports. Retrieved from, <http://www.worldstopexports.com/polands-top-10-exports/3160>

2 Report of the Visa Office 2013. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2013.html>

3 International tourism, number of departures | Data | Table. Retrieved from, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.DPRT>

4 Report of the Visa Office 2013. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2013.html>

5 Tourism Flows Outbound in Brazil. Retrieved from Euromonitor International website: <http://www.euromonitor.com/tourism-flows-outbound-in-brazil/report>

6 Top 10 International Markets:2013 Visitation and Spending. Retrieved from National Travel and Tourism Office website: <http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/2013-Top-10-Markets.pdf>

Brazil is a market where large potential growths in international travel are hindered by the U.S. visa requirement. Legislative changes that would allow Brazil to enter the VWP would be extremely beneficial to the U.S. travel and tourism industry.

China:

China is a market in which a significant growth in travelers can be achieved. In 2013, the U.S. issued 1,146,322 B1/B2 visas, stemming from 1,252,810 total applications. While this represents a 26% increase in visas issued over 2012,¹ it is only a small portion of Chinese international travel. In 2013, Chinese international travelers topped 97 million, yet only 1.86% of those traveled to the U.S.² Chinese travelers have a tremendous economic impact on the U.S. travel and tourism industry, spending \$9.8 billion in 2013,³ and are therefore of tremendous interest to the private sector.

A 2010 U.S. Travel Association survey indicates that 81.6% of Chinese visitors to the U.S. identified the distance required to travel to the consulate for the interview among the factors making the visa process most difficult. Furthermore, 25% of all Chinese say that the ease of applying for a visa would determine what country they would choose to visit.⁴

Elements of the U.S. visa system negatively impact the number of Chinese applicants who choose to apply; yet demand for international travel in this market continues to increase. The Board recommends that process improvements be focused on this key market so that an increase in the Chinese market share can be achieved. Making the visa application easier and more accessible, enhancing the consular experience, and improving the U.S. brand image would address negative perceptions around applying for a U.S. visa. Together, these improvements would allow for a significant increase in travelers to the U.S. from China.

India:

India is an emerging world market with a burgeoning middle class that is now opting to travel overseas as a result of higher disposable income. The greatest concerns expressed by Indians surrounding the topic of international travel to the U.S. are the rate of visa rejection and its impact on future visa applications. Further, the difficulty in traveling to a U.S. consulate for in-person interviews also deters Indian travelers from pursuing U.S. visas. There are eight cities in India with populations greater than 2 million that do not have a U.S. visa-processing center.

In 2013, the U.S. issued 376,998 visas in India, with a refusal rate of 18.7%. Across the five U.S. consular sections in India, the average wait time is five calendar days.⁵ In 2013, the U.S. welcomed 859,000 Indian international travelers. During that year, Indian travelers spent a total of \$5.6 billion in the U.S., ranking the country 10th on the top spender list.⁶ However, this number of visitors to the U.S. is just 0.5% of the 16.63 million Indian international travelers in 2013.⁷ The number of Indian international travelers is expected to reach 50 million by 2020.⁸ To capture this increase in travel, overall process improvements as described above would allow for the processing of more visa applications and help to improve the U.S. brand image.

1 Report of the Visa Office 2012. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2012.html>

2 Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014. Retrieved from Hotel.com website:

https://press.hotels.com/content/themes/CITM/assets/pdf/CITM_UK_PDF_2014.pdf

3 Top 10 International Markets:2013 Visitation and Spending. Retrieved from National Travel and Tourism Office website:

<http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/2013-Top-10-Markets.pdf>

4 Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014. Retrieved from Hotel.com website:

https://press.hotels.com/content/themes/CITM/assets/pdf/CITM_UK_PDF_2014.pdf

5 Report of the Visa Office 2012. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2012.html>

6 Top 10 International Markets:2013 Visitation and Spending. Retrieved from National Travel and Tourism Office website:

<http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/2013-Top-10-Markets.pdf>

7 India: departures of nationals 2013 | Statistic. Retrieved from,

<http://www.statista.com/statistics/207009/number-of-outbound-visits-of-indian-nationals-from-india-since-2000/>

8 Report Yearbook of Tourism Statistics. (2014). Retrieved from United Nations World Tourism Organization website:

<http://www2.unwto.org/publication/yearbook-tourism-statistics-data-2008-2012-2014-edition>

SECTION 3: SUPPORTIVE RESEARCH

The following section seeks to provide the background and supportive research that was considered in developing the recommendations detailed in Section 2 of the report. The research process included identifying key countries for travel expansion and analyzing global marketplace considerations for system-based visa improvements that could be made, both of which we conclude play a critical role in reaching the travel goals set by the President.

In consideration of the private sector travel and tourism industry leaders who make up the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) and for whom this report was prepared, we examined closely the customer experience of the visa process. As TTAB members include some of the world's most forward-thinking and innovative hospitality experts, we concluded that cross-sector partnerships and collaboration could occur to make service related improvements to the current visa system. Accordingly, we found that the recommendations associated with an improvement plan must consider issues of visa accessibility, traveler perception, customer service, and other traveler impediments such as the cost of visas, the fear of refusal, and the preparation commitment that is required to obtain a B1 or B2 visa.

Ultimately, we found that a visa-system improvement plan must not only consider the number of visas processed, but also the number of qualified applications that are not being submitted as well.

Key Country Identification and Country Specific Recommendations:

As noted in the TTAB letter in Section 2, we identified four key countries (Poland, Brazil, China and India) where an increased focus on process improvements or admission to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) would increase the number of travelers to the U.S. and help make significant progress towards achieving 100 million international visitors by 2021 - maximizing the economic and cultural benefits of international travel to the U.S.

Poland

Poland has long been a strategic partner of the United States in Europe. A member of NATO, Poland has, since 2003, deployed forces to participate in U.S. and NATO missions in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Since shedding communism 25 years ago, Poland has seen its economy grow to 22nd in the world with a GDP of \$814 billion.¹ Its robust economy was the only European economy not to decline in 2009 and has weathered the Euro crisis with above average growth rates.² Poland is the only member of the Schengen area that is not part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). According to the Schengen agreement, U.S. citizens may enter Poland for up to 90 days for tourism or business purposes without a visa. The fact that Poland has not been able to join the VWP has been a political issue for years and may discourage Polish citizens from traveling to the U.S.

In 2013, the U.S. processed 69,964 B1/B2 visa applications in Poland, and granted visas to 62,408 people, representing an 89.2% acceptance rate. This represents a 3.2% increase in visas issued over 2012.³ Between the two U.S. consular sections in Poland, average wait times for a visa interview are one day. Of the 43.3 million Polish international travelers in 2011, however, the U.S. only received 0.14%,⁴ showing room for significant growth in the market share of Polish international travelers.

Of the 38 countries in the VWP, 29 are European. The Polish feel discriminated against compared to their neighbors, and the large Polish population in the U.S. would benefit from easier travel for their relatives. Accordingly, we recommend adding Poland to the VWP to capture the economic and cultural benefits the Polish people could bring to the U.S., and to remove an irritant in bilateral relations. Poland's admittance could be made possible by reforming the formula used to calculate visa refusal rates. As a qualification for the VWP, "refusal rates"—the percentage of visa applications denied by consular officers—have been used to determine a country's eligibility to participate in the program, and the refusal rate for Polish applicants is above the 10% rate mandated by law. The rates were interpreted as a measure of the propensity to "overstay," to remain unlawfully in the United States beyond the 90-day period authorized under the VWP. These overstay rates are difficult to calculate.

There is ample evidence to suggest, however, that refusal rates are not an optimum metric for assessing the potential to overstay. For example, if an individual submits five visa applications in a year and all are denied, they are all counted toward the refusal rate—thus inflating the rate. While it is true that if a subsequent application is approved in the same year, the previous refusals are not counted against the rate, the reality is that often, as the number of refusals climbs, the likelihood of a subsequent approval does not. Furthermore, individuals may be denied visas for reasons other than a propensity to overstay (including, for example, health-related issues and criminal concerns).

¹ Poland's Top 10 Exports - World's Top Exports. Retrieved from, <http://www.worldstopexports.com/polands-top-10-exports/3160>

² Economic Boom: Poland Is Europe's New High-Flyer - SPIEGEL ONLINE. Retrieved from, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/economic-boom-poland-is-europe-s-new-high-flyer-a-747244.html>

³ Report of the Visa Office 2013. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2013.html>

⁴ International tourism, number of departures | Data | Table. Retrieved from, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.DPRT>

Brazil

As detailed in the Letter to Secretary Pritzker above, we strongly recommend working to admit Brazil into the VWP. Brazil has established itself as one of the dominant emerging markets in the world and is the strongest economy in Latin America. In recent years, the United States has lost considerable international traveler market share in Brazil to Western Europe, in part because Brazilians do not require visas to travel to most European countries. According to a 2010 report from the Office of Travel & Tourism Industries and Oxford Economics, these countries control more than half (52%) of the Brazilian long-haul market, while the U.S. owns less than one-third (26%).¹

While wait times for visas have been reduced to just days, our research concluded that the visa process is still burdensome to Brazilian travelers, impacting the U.S. market share. In a 2010 U.S. Travel Association survey of 500 travelers from Brazil, 70.2% of respondents planning to travel to the U.S. identified the distance required to travel to the consulate and the fact that there would be no refund of the application fee in the event of visa rejection as among the factors making the visa process most difficult. As with Poland, this has a correlating political impact.

Today, Brazilians are among the top spenders when traveling to the U.S. – as they rank fourth overall, and rank first among those countries not in the VWP. In 2013, the U.S. issued 925,678 B1/B2 visas in Brazil, with an overall refusal rate of 3.2%. Across the four U.S. consular sections in Brazil, wait times averaged an impressive two calendar days.² However, of the 9.1 million international Brazilian travelers in 2013,³ 2.06 million visited the U.S.⁴ - dropping the U.S. total market share of Brazilian travelers from 26% in 2010, to 23% in 2013.

Brazil is a market where large potential growths in international travel are hindered by the U.S. visa requirement. Therefore, legislative changes that would allow Brazil to enter the VWP would be extremely beneficial to the U.S. travel and tourism industry. Additionally, the letter details prioritizing efforts that bring new countries into the program, and supports discussions with eight other countries that have expressed interest in VWP designation status. These include: Argentina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Israel, Malaysia, Romania, Turkey, and Uruguay (noting that both Argentina and Uruguay were prior members). By creating a queuing system for admittance to the VWP, the U.S. can assist countries in reaching eligibility status and expedite acceptance. By publicly naming countries that are in line for admittance to the VWP, the private sector can work with industry contacts across the globe to ensure that foreign governments are working with the U.S. Department of State to provide all necessary data. Furthermore, it shows a commitment by the U.S. government to other countries, establishing our desire to have easy travel with, and therefore open collaboration and innovation with the rest of the world.

1 The Return on Investment of Brand USA Marketing. Retrieved from Oxford Economics website:

<http://www.thebrandusa.com/~media/Files/Key%20Dox/2014/ROI%20Results/Brand%20USA%20ROI%20FY2013%20Final.pdf>

2 Report of the Visa Office 2013. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2013.html>

3 Tourism Flows Outbound in Brazil. Retrieved from Euromonitor International website:

<http://www.euromonitor.com/tourism-flows-outbound-in-brazil/report>

4 Top 10 International Markets:2013 Visitation and Spending. Retrieved from National Travel and Tourism Office website:

<http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/2013-Top-10-Markets.pdf>

China

China is a market in which a significant growth in travelers can be achieved. In 2013, the U.S. issued 1,146,322 B1/B2 Visas, stemming from 1,252,810 total applications. While this represents a 26% increase in visas issued over 2012,¹ it is only a small portion of Chinese international travel. In 2013, Chinese international travelers topped 97 million, yet only 1.86% of those traveled to the U.S.² Chinese travelers have a tremendous economic impact on the U.S. travel and tourism industry, spending \$9.8 billion in 2013,³ and are therefore of tremendous interest to the private sector.

A 2010 U.S. Travel Association survey indicated that 81.6% of Chinese visitors to the U.S. identified the distance required to travel to a U.S. consulate for the interview and the fact that there was no refund of the application fee in the event of rejection as among the most important factors making the visa process difficult. Furthermore, 25% of all Chinese say that the ease of applying for a visa would determine what country they would choose to visit.⁴

Our research found that elements of the U.S. visa system negatively impact the number of Chinese applicants who choose to apply; yet demand for international travel in this market continues to increase. Accordingly, we recommend that process improvements be focused on this key market so that an increase in the Chinese market share can be achieved (see: Addendum to U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board Recommendations in the Letter to Secretary Pritzker).

Perhaps the largest visa related process improvement we identified in our research surrounded the extension of visa validity in China. Extending validity not only reduces the need for frequent travelers to reapply each year, it would reduce the workload at U.S. consular sections and thus allow for the processing of more new applicants, which could encourage more Chinese travelers to apply for a U.S. visa. By making the visa application easier and more accessible, enhancing the consular experience, and improving the U.S. brand image, private and public sector stakeholders alike could work to collaboratively address negative perceptions around applying for a U.S. visa. Together, these improvements would allow for a significant increase in travelers to the U.S. from China. (Note: while the President announced the extension of visa validity for Chinese travelers to 120 months, we include our research below, as it demonstrates the importance of the issue for other markets.)

Visa Validity in China:

Research supports that visa validity in China should be increased. By making incremental moves to increase the maximum visa validity in China to 10 years, the amount of travel to the U.S. from China may be enhanced.

The following table compares visa validity durations of prospective or emerging travel markets, and compares those durations to countries that, for political or historical reasons, may be considered as outliers in terms of traditionally purposeful sources for increased tourism.

1 Report of the Visa Office 2013. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2013.html>

2 Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014. Retrieved from Hotel.com website:

https://press.hotels.com/content/themes/CITM/assets/pdf/CITM_UK_PDF_2014.pdf

3 Top 10 International Markets:2013 Visitation and Spending. Retrieved from National Travel and Tourism Office website:

<http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/2013-Top-10-Markets.pdf>

4 Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014. Retrieved from Hotel.com website:

https://press.hotels.com/content/themes/CITM/assets/pdf/CITM_UK_PDF_2014.pdf

Prospective Countries

Visa Classification	Fee	Number of Applications	Validity Period
China*			
B-1	None	Multiple	12 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	12 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	12 Months
Australia* Visa Waiver Participant: Fees Required			
B-1	None	Multiple	12 Months**
B-2	None	Multiple	12 Months**
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	12 Months**
Brazil*			
B-1	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
Argentina			
B-1	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
Poland			
B-1	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
India*			
B-1	None	Multiple	120 Months B
B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months B
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months B
Israel			
B-1	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months

* A Top 10 Travel Spending Country

** Tiered Fee Schedule: B-1/B-2 visa valid for 60 months, multiple entries, \$25.00 or multiple entries for 12 months, no fee.

Source: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country/TU.html>

Countries for Comparison

VisaClassification	Fee	Number of Applications	ValidityPeriod
<i>Russia</i>			
B-1	None	Multiple	36 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	36 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	36 Months
<i>Iraq</i>			
B-1	None	Multiple	12 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	12 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	12 Months
<i>Afganistan</i>			
B-1	None	One	3 Months
B-2	None	One	3 Months
B-1/B-2	None	One	3 Months
<i>Mexico</i>			
B-1	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
B-1/B-2	None	Multiple	120 Months
<i>Cuba</i>			
B-1	None	One	6 Months
B-2	None	Multiple	60 Months
B-1/B-2	None	One	6 Months

Source: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country/TU.html>

Interestingly, China's current validity is 12 months, the same length as Iraq and less than Russia's current visa validity period of 36 months. Additionally, validity for countries such as Brazil, Poland, India and Israel are all 10 years. Considering China, a global leader of tourism and travel spending, the realignment of visa validity is an important factor in increasing international travel to the U.S.

During the writing of this report, President Obama announced that China and the U.S. would reciprocally start granting visas to each other's citizens valid for up to decade. Under the visa agreement, B1 and B2 visas will be valid for 10 years, while student and cultural exchange visas will last for five.¹

The significance of this announcement should not be understated. In a public announcement during his November 2014 trip to China, President Obama noted the extension of visa validity is expected to provide a major payoff in both trade and investment. As the President explained, "Last year, 1.8 million Chinese visitors to the United States contributed \$21 billion to our economy and supported more than 100,000 American jobs. This agreement could help us more than quadruple those numbers."² And, according to a fact sheet issued by the U.S. Department of State following the announcement, "This new arrangement will be more convenient and less costly for travelers. Prior to this, Chinese and American business travelers and tourists had to apply annually if visiting the United States or China each year." It goes on to say, "The arrangement underscores the U.S. commitment to promote bilateral tourism and trade and increase opportunities for people-to-people engagement"³

In line with our research and findings, we are pleased with this announcement and believe that the extension of visa validity highlights the importance of including issues related to the visa system on a collaborative, cross-sector agenda that works to facilitate increased international travel to the U.S.

Visa Validity Outside of China

Outside of China, there are a number of medium sized countries that, taken together, could add up to make a significant impact in increasing international travel to the U.S. These countries include Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia - all of which currently have visa validity durations of 60 months. Visa validity extensions represent a strategy that could be implemented without legislation. Doing so makes travel to the U.S. easier, and reciprocally benefits American travel to outside countries. According to the Foreign Affairs Manual issued by the U.S. State Department, extensions of visa validity are supported where possible.⁴

Visa Documentation:

As detailed in the letter to Secretary Pritzker, another process-related recommendation aimed at improving the travel experience for Chinese tourists stems from the documentation necessary to acquire a visa. As stated in the letter, our research led us to conclude that an effort should be made to reduce the amount of documentation that applicants are required to present Consular officers, or to make the process easier by allowing for electronic submission and translation of personal documents so they can be reviewed before or without an in-person interview.

1 US, China agree to expand validity of business, tourist visas to 10 years | Fox News. Retrieved from,

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2014/11/10/us-china-agree-to-expand-validity-business-tourist-visas-to-10-years/>

2 Obama Says U.S.-China Visa Extensions Will Provide Big Trade Payoffs - Businessweek. Retrieved from,

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-11-11/obama-says-u-dot-s-dot-china-visa-extensions-will-provide-big-trade-payoffs>

3 The United States and China To Extend Visas for Short-term Business Travelers, Tourists, and Students. Retrieved from,

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/11/233904.htm>

4 Foreign Affairs Manual. Retrieved from,

<http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/fam/>

According to U.S. Mission China's ustraveldocs.com, Chinese travelers must bring the following documents to their interview for a U.S. Visa:¹

- Current proof of income, tax payments, property or business ownership, or assets.
- Your travel itinerary and/or other explanation about your planned trip.
- A letter from your employer detailing your position, salary, how long you have been employed, any authorized vacation, and the business purpose, if any, of your U.S. trip.
- Criminal/court records pertaining to any arrest or conviction anywhere, even if you completed your sentence or were later pardoned.

The website notes that original documents are always preferred over photocopies and that travelers must bring these documents with them to the visa interview, and that documents received by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General via fax, email, or mail will not be considered. The same information was specified for tourists of India as well.²

Considering the documentation requirements that travelers face, the current system presents a significant opportunity to leverage technology for improving the visa application experience. One way to leverage technology, might be in the creation of a secure, web-based system operated or overseen by the State Department that allows prospective travelers the opportunity to create an online "traveler profile" in their native language. Once a profile is setup, the prospective traveler could then begin to upload documentation required for visa acceptance. This system could lead to other considerations surrounding how a pre-approval system might further enhance the traveler experience, as pre-approval would provide the traveler with increased confidence that the documentation requirements have been satisfied prior to the in-person interview at their local Consular office - the final step in the visa approval process. This improvement represents an opportunity to leverage public-private collaboration in the creation of a traveler-friendly web experience.

¹ Apply for a U.S. Visa | Business/Tourist Visa - China (English). Retrieved from, <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/cn/cn-niv-typeb1b2.asp>

² Ibid.

India

India is an emerging world market with a burgeoning middle class that is now opting to travel overseas as a result of increased disposable income. The greatest concerns expressed by Indians surrounding the topic of international travel to the U.S. are the rate of visa rejection and its impact on future visa applications. Further, the difficulty in traveling to a U.S. consulate for in-person interviews also deters Indian travelers from pursuing U.S. visas. There are eight cities in India with populations greater than 2 million that do not have a U.S. visa-processing office.

In 2013, the U.S. issued 376,998 visas in India, with a refusal rate of 18.7%. Across the five U.S. consular sections in India, the average wait time is five calendar days.¹ In 2013, the U.S. welcomed 859,000 Indian international travelers. During that year, Indian travelers spent a total of \$5.6 billion in the U.S., ranking the country 10th on the top spender list.² However, this number of visitors to the U.S. is just 0.5% of the 16.63 million Indian international travelers in 2013.³ The number of Indian international travelers is expected to reach 50 million by 2020.⁴

To capture a larger share of this increase in travel, overall process improvements as described in the letter to Secretary Pritzker would work to increase the number of qualified visa applications, and help to improve the U.S. brand image as a travel destination. More specifically, considering travel projections from India and current U.S. travel statistics as highlighted above, administrative actions that work towards facilitating the adoption of an electronic interview system or videoconferencing as an alternative to in-person interviews, have the potential to decrease travel barriers to the U.S. Additionally, consular management actions that work to improve customer experiences and bolster the image of the U.S. as a travel destination are crucial in growing market share in the emerging and growing market of Indian international travelers.

The potential benefits of action related to India are many and expand the traditional economic benefits associated with increased travel. According to the 2010 United States Census, the Asian Indian population in the United States grew from almost 1,678,765 in 2000 to 2,843,391 in 2010, a growth rate of 69.37% - one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States.⁵ With a growing early-generation population of Indian Americans, visa improvements and bilateral agreements made between the U.S. and India carry with them the potential for political and cultural benefits for both countries.

1 Report of the Visa Office 2013. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/annual-reports/report-of-the-visa-office-2013.html>

2 Top 10 International Markets:2013 Visitation and Spending. Retrieved from National Travel and Tourism Office website:

<http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/2013-Top-10-Markets.pdf>

3 India: departures of nationals 2013 | Statistic. Retrieved from,

<http://www.statista.com/statistics/207009/number-of-outbound-visits-of-indian-nationals-from-india-since-2000/>

4 Report Yearbook of Tourism Statistics. (2014). Retrieved from United Nations World Tourism Organization website:

<http://www2.unwto.org/publication/yearbook-tourism-statistics-data-2008-2012-2014-edition>

5 American FactFinder - Results. Retrieved from,

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table

Marketplace Considerations

In developing the recommendations for the TTAB Visa Subcommittee letter to the Department of Commerce, we performed an external analysis of the visa processing and issuance system and identified four countries that are leaders in international travel and represent system best practices. Specifically, Australia and France stand out as leaders due to the ease of traveling to these countries. South Korea and Singapore are regarded as industry champions when considering the hospitality associated with traveling to these countries.

In 2013, France again was the most traveled-to country in the world. During that year, France attracted 84.7 million foreign tourists. This number of tourists is significant compared to the 69.8 million international visitors welcomed to the United States—the second most traveled to country in 2013. France is attractive to visitors because of the ease of entry experienced by tourists. France does not require a visa for travel from the United States, Brazil or the countries belonging to the European Union who plan to stay less than 90 days. As noted above, the U.S. is losing the Brazilian international travel market share to France because France does not require Brazilian visitors to obtain a visa, while the U.S. does. France also takes a greater market share of European international travelers because the country's transportation infrastructure (i.e. railroad system) is easily accessed, efficient and navigable. All things considered, it is important to note that while France is the top travel destination in the world, they rank third in overall total tourist spending behind both the U.S. (first) and Spain (second).¹

Australia is another country that represents best practices in international travel. It requires visas for many travelers, but allows them to apply by mail or online. This process is very efficient and appealing to travelers in countries such as China where traveling to a consulate to obtain a visa is not always an easy task. Though China has a developed transportation system, the trip to one of the five U.S. consulates to obtain a visa is much more time consuming and expensive than applying for an Australian visa online.

South Korea and Singapore are model countries in customer service and hospitality for international travelers. South Korea has a very accommodating and flexible visa application system. The country allows international travelers to enter the country, dine at South Korean restaurants and spend a night at a South Korean hotel all without obtaining a visa. This practice makes South Korea an attractive layover destination and encourages international travelers to travel through South Korea before continuing on to their final destination. Though the United States is not generally a layover destination, the hospitableness of South Korea is something the U.S. could incorporate into the treatment of foreign travelers when they are in the process of applying for their visas to the U.S. Singapore also highly values customer service and customer experience when it comes to international travel. It is a leader in making the process easy, informative and friendly. The consistency of experiences surrounding Singapore's airports, website and officers reflects these values.

¹ Top Ten Countries Earning Most from Tourism | Which Country Earns Most from Tourism | WhichCountry.co. Retrieved from, <http://www.whichcountry.co/?p=1898&preview=true>

The Hospitality Way

The TTAB includes some of the world's leading experts in tourism and hospitality. This inspired us to analyze aspects of the visa system through a hospitality lens. Accordingly, the hospitality way, looks at the tourism and hospitality industry system for opportunities for customer service improvements and assesses current international traveler perceptions of the U.S., as well as the U.S. travel brand.

In effort to gain first-hand information related to hospitality and traveler perceptions, our research team organized a town hall meeting, U.S. Visas - An International Perspective, held at the University of Minnesota. The purpose of the meeting was to gather personal experiences from the university international community, as well to gather visa process suggestions from them.

Students were invited through international students organization email list. The participants were all international students from the University of Minnesota, mostly from the Hubert Humphrey School of Public Affairs. 27 students participated, representing 10 different countries.

U.S. Visas - An International Perspective	
Countries Represented:	China Iran Malaysia Mexico Nepal New Zealand Singapore Sir Lanka Thailand Zimbabwe

We started the event with a brief introduction and opened the floor to conversation and experience sharing. We then asked participants a series of fill-in-the-blank questions that were prepared in advance, including:

- The most difficult part of traveling to the US is ____
- The most difficult part of the visa process is ____
- The best part of the visa process is ____
- The visa process is too ____
- Compared to the US, other countries visa process are ____

After the participants answered all above questions, we proceeded with a group discussion based on the results we gathered. Based on stories and open-ended questions, we asked participants to offer solutions and recommendations. To wrap up, we distributed a formal survey as detailed in Appendix B.

Observations: U.S. Visas - An International Perspective

While the majority of the participants carry only a F1 (Student) Visa, which requires more paperwork than a B1/B2 visa, there were several participants who had traveled to the U.S prior to becoming a student, and who had experience in applying for a B1/B2 visa. And while the number of international participants was far short of a scientific sample, many of the insights that were shared by this group support much of the descriptive data we collected from our research related to customer experience and perceptions of the visa system and U.S. travel.

In 2010, a U.S. Travel Association performed a survey of 1,500 travelers from Brazil, China and India. According to the study, with answers averaged across the three countries, 84.3% of travelers found that travel to the U.S is more difficult than travel to other countries.¹ The town hall survey we conducted appears to confirm that this may still be an issue, as several participants stated that compared to the U.S., they found other country's visa processes to be easy. In addition, the Travel Association report also reported that around one third of travelers from each country surveyed identify the visa process as the main factor making it difficult to travel to the U.S.² In our town hall, a participant from Nepal mentioned that it took more than three months to prepare and complete the visa application.

In the Travel Association report, *Ready For Take Off*, a travel scenario is provided in which a family of four from Manaus, Brazil (Population 1.79 Million), is attempting to apply for a U.S. visa. In order to do so, the report indicates that the family would need to travel 1,250 miles to Brasilia (the closest consular office) for the required in-person interview. The report details the expenses that would likely be occurred for the family as a result of the in-person interview requirement. Including transportation and hotel accommodations, it was estimated that the visa process alone for the family of four would cost \$2,000.³ Similarly, in our town hall, an international student from Iran mentioned that for an in-person interview, an applicant must travel to another country for the interview itself.

Another similarity we identified between the current available research on traveler experience and our town hall was poor customer experience at the Embassy or Consular Section. The Travel Association report, *Ready for Take Off*, describes the situation in China: "In Beijing, the consular waiting room is crowded and cramped. In Guangzhou, hundreds of applicants stand out in the elements every day as they are checked for entry into the building."⁴ A similar customer experience was shared in our town hall, and appears to confirm that this may still be an issue related to traveler experience, despite improvements in wait time and scheduling. As one international traveler specified, "people just move from one waiting room to another waiting room."

Finally, the Chinese International Travel Report documented that the U.S. is ranked the seventh most welcoming to Chinese travelers. Australia, Singapore, France, New Zealand, South Korea and Hong Kong are ahead of U.S. in terms of customer experience.⁵ Responses from our town hall appear to confirm that issues of welcoming and hospitality remain a defining element of the traveler experience. Most people mentioned Australia and Europe as having replaced the U.S. as their preferred travel destination. As noted in the Travel Association report referred to above, poor customer service sends the wrong message, and may discouraging travelers from even trying.⁶ Interestingly, while most participants in our town hall mentioned that consular officers are friendly, many responses indicate room for improvement. As one international participant from Zimbabwe explained, "At my local consular office, military officials with weapons stand on guard.... It is a very intimidating process." The participant felt scared and people could not walk in front of the Embassy.

As mentioned above, in order to increase the economic impact of international travel, it is important to continue to improve matters related to hospitality. The U.S. embassy acts as the face of the country, especially for first time travelers. If the applicants had a bad customer experience, they very likely could perceive the U.S. as not welcoming. In order to improve customer experience during the visa process, collaborative efforts between the private sector and leaders of the Department of Homeland Security and State could work to provide applicants a more welcoming experience, even while maintaining high security for the Embassy or Consulate.

1 Ready for Takeoff, U.S. Travel Association, 2011. Retrieved from, <http://www.smartervisapolicy.org/site/documents/VisaReport.pdf>

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014. Retrieved from Hotel.com website: https://press.hotels.com/content/themes/CITM/assets/pdf/CITM_UK_PDF_2014.pdf

6 Ready for Takeoff, U.S. Travel Association, 2011. Retrieved from, <http://www.smartervisapolicy.org/site/documents/VisaReport.pdf>

SECTION 4: ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN CONSIDERATIONS

In the following section, we begin to form the advocacy platform to support the recommendations detailed in section two. The advocacy campaign considerations here outline the work necessary to garner the political and stakeholder support around these recommendations. The first subsection, *Exploring the Broader Impact*, considers the impact that increased travel has. By categorizing the impact in three distinctive sectors, we illustrate the variety of stakeholders that are affected in some way by increased international travel. The next subsection, *Benefits and Costs of Increased Travel*, looks specifically at how these stakeholders are impacted. In doing so, we hope to paint a clearer picture of what is involved in building a future advocacy and engagement campaign. Finally, we conclude the section with a five-step plan for strategy development that explores tactical recommendations for execution across a tailored advocacy continuum for Carlson and the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) Visa Subcommittee.

Exploring the Broader Impact

In building the case for taking steps necessary to increase international travel to the U.S., we must first consider the impact associated with increased international travel and where those impacts are felt. There are many vested stakeholders in strong support of increasing international travel to the U.S., but there are also those stakeholders who are not. A well-defined advocacy platform is one where TTAB considers the full spectrum of *the who, what, and where* of the issue. These are critical strategic considerations in building an effective advocacy campaign - who is involved, what is important to them, and where do they stand on the issue. Doing so enables advocates to engage with multiple audiences on a variety of different levels.

The following analysis intends to provide a better understanding of the sectors and stakeholders impacted by increased international travel.

The Sectors Impacted

There are three primary sectors affected by increased international travel to the U.S: economic, cultural/educational, and political. Within each of these sectors, exist a variety of stakeholders. By broadening the impact spectrum to include multiple sectors, we can begin to more clearly identify and quantify the types of stakeholders that exist surrounding increased international travel to the U.S. Finally, it is important to note that there often can exist a mutual reinforcing impact across one or more sectors. This will become clearer in the following sections.

Economic	Cultural & Educational	Political & Governmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel and Tourism Industry• Labor• Business Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universities• International and Early Generation Americans• Arts and Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• President• Executive Branch• Congress• State and Local Governments• Political Advocacy Groups• Foreign Governments

Economic Sector

The economic sector is one that has been well documented and is one that operates as the primary force behind the work of the travel and tourism industry. As discussed in the introduction to this report, increased international travel to the U.S. has a significant economic impact and is a priority of many stakeholders within the U.S. economy. However, it is important to consider the full spectrum of the sector, as identifying the types of stakeholders within it is critical to future advocacy.

Within the sphere of increased international travel, we define the economic sector as the space in which business, service, or monetary exchanges occur, and where these exchanges are produced either directly or as a result of international travel. The first group of stakeholders within this sector comprises the businesses and services that operate within the **Travel and Tourism Industry**. With tourism characterized as travel for recreation, leisure, religious, or family purposes, this stakeholder group includes businesses related to transportation services, such as airlines, cruise ships, rental cars, and taxicabs; hospitality services, such as accommodations, including hotels and resorts, and booking agencies; entertainment venues, such as amusement parks, casinos, shopping malls, music venues and theaters; dining services, such as local restaurants, bars, and related food services; and other businesses that supply goods for traveler purchase, including souvenirs, clothing, and other supplies. In total, this represents a very expansive and powerful group of stakeholders that can be tapped for the purposes of advocacy and message delivery in future campaigns.

A second sizeable group of stakeholders that exists within the economic sector includes **Labor**. Tourism and travel produce and sustain jobs related to the services and goods purchased and consumed by travelers. For many Americans, the travel and tourism industry represents their source of income and livelihood, either directly or indirectly. In 2013, 14.9 million jobs were supported by travel expenditures, including 7.9 million jobs directly in the travel industry and 7.0 million in related industries. All totaled, \$209.5 billion in wages were earned by American workers directly employed by travel.¹ It is important to think of labor as a separate stakeholder in the economic sector, as labor can be considered a facilitator of the travel exchange versus the exchange itself. In projecting a future advocacy campaign, it is politically advised to categorize labor as its own vested stakeholder group, as historically, the group has participated in political organizing and has been a powerful advocate and lobbyist for the creation and protection of jobs over time. For example, a report issued by the International Confederation Free Trade Union and Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD explains, “Tourism is a labor-intensive industry, and trade union members work in every part of it.” Labor can, according to the report, play a major role in disseminating information, coordinating the education of workers, and engaging workers in other forms of action.² See Appendix C for a detailed map of labor related to hospitality and tourism.

A third stand-alone group of economic stakeholders are **Business and Conference Travel**. With a growing global economy, many business leaders see international travel as a key component of global business operations. Additionally, when looking specifically at conference related travel, local municipalities and their leaders are often involved in advocating for groups to hold a conference within their city. The impacts of increased international travel associated with business and conference travel are deep-reaching, as it involves several layers and relational ties between both private and public entities within.

The impacts of increased travel associated with the economic sector are economically oriented, quantifiable in nature, and are felt deeply by many. While the number of stakeholders is many, it is not the only home to the impacts produced by international travel. Two other critical sectors-- cultural/educational and political--include stakeholders with both influence and power.

1 U.S. TRAVEL ANSWER SHEET. Retrieved from U.S. Travel Association website:

https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US_Travel_AnswerSheet_June_2014.pdf

2 TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE WEB OF TOURISM. Retrieved from Department of Economic and Social Affairs website:

<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/icftu2.pdf>

Cultural and Educational Sector

There are inherent cultural and educational properties associated with international travel. We define this sector as the space in which institutions and cultural elements function or are produced as a result of international travel. The impact of increased international travel in this sector is vital to understanding and developing an advocacy platform that extends beyond economic impacts and related benefit.

Within the cultural and educational sector, are two significant stakeholders. The first are **Universities**, which function to create valuable intellectual resources. A part of this role also includes stimulating regional social and cultural vitality, education, and providing society access to knowledge and research. In this sense, a university's ability to create public value rests on its ability to share information, and increase both global awareness and diversity in the communities in which they operate. As discussed later in the benefits and costs of international travel, universities represent a key consideration in identifying support in an advocacy campaign for increased international travel and supporting political goals of diplomacy.

A second important stakeholder group in the cultural and educational sector is **International Americans or Early-Generation Americans** with international roots and families. For generations, immigrants have left their originating countries to start anew in the U.S.; and for the families of immigrants and Early Generation Americans, international travel means something much deeper than just tourism. For many, it represents an ability to stay connected with family and friends. The ability of their extended families to easily visit the U.S. influences the image or perception they hold of the U.S.

A third important stakeholder group in the cultural and educational sector is **Arts and Entertainment**, for whom international travelers make up a significant portion of their business. According to the U.S. Travel Association, the top leisure travel activities for overseas visitors include: (1) shopping; (2) sightseeing; (3) fine dining; (4) national parks/monuments; and (5) art galleries/museums.¹ Additionally, increased tourism improves the quality of life and builds community pride at the local level through the diversification of local economies and preservation of a community's unique character.² It is at this nexus that the relationship between increased international travel and the arts and entertainment sector produces external impacts within the local community.

Taken together, these cultural and educational sector stakeholders represent non-traditional allies in the case for increased international travel. With proper messaging and engagement strategies, collaborative relationships with these key stakeholders can offer the opportunity for the creation of a well-rounded advocacy campaign - one that spans many different groups and provides deeper and richer levels of purpose.

Political and Governmental Sector

There are numerous political and government stakeholders whose interests are impacted by international travel and the issue of improved visa processing. This sector is less easily defined and less easily categorized than the economic or cultural and educational sectors. Additionally, as explored later, both costs and benefits (and thus risks) for political stakeholders make improving visa processing or adding countries to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) perhaps more complex than for many economic actors and stakeholders.

¹ U.S. TRAVEL ANSWER SHEET. Retrieved from U.S. Travel Association website:

https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US_Travel_AnswerSheet_June_2014.pdf

² Cultural Heritage Tourism. Retrieved from,

<http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/resources/research.htm>

In the political and governmental sector are political actors at the national, state, and local level whose interests may be impacted and the government officials whose job it is to administer and enforce laws and policies on visa issuance, border entry, security, and diplomacy, even while they seek to facilitate travel and improve relations. In considering a future advocacy platform, it is important to understand the role these political and governmental stakeholders play in larger government operations. For instance, across the government spectrum of agencies and governmental bodies, there may exist competing demands or priorities. Understanding where these boundaries exist, and where there is mutual support, allows for a deeper working knowledge of the various stakeholder positions on the matter of increased international travel to the U.S.

The first stakeholder within the sector is the **President of the United States**, who is charged with protecting country's security, promoting economic growth, maintaining good relations with other countries, and who needs political support for other issues, if not for his or her own re-election. The impact of increased travel on the President, while political in nature, produces opportunities and risks that can shape a presidency - including public opinion around their performance as an elected official.

A second group of stakeholders within the political and governmental sector are **Executive Branch Agencies**. These are front-line implementers of the laws related to visa issuance and border entry, as well as national security and economic affairs. The **Department of State**, for example is charged with both maintaining good relations with other countries and administering the visa processing system. In doing so, it must administer the visa system while maintaining a proper balance between safeguarding U.S. security, including preventing illegal immigration, and facilitating travel. The **Department of Homeland Security** (DHS) is also directly involved with entry and status of international visitors. With DHS responsible for domestic security and counterterrorism, it may see increased international travel and easing of visa procedures or expansion of the VWP as potentially counter to its security mandate. A third executive branch agency to consider is The **Department of Commerce** (DOC), which is engaged in efforts to improve the U.S. economy – including expanding exports. The Commerce Department has a vested interest in increasing travel because of the economic benefits increased travel produces.

A third stakeholder is **Congress**. Increased travel to the U.S. and efforts to expedite visa processes can have positive or negative impacts on members of congress often depending on the constituents that they represent. For example, voters may be pro or con international travel and improved visa processing depending on views of international tourism and travel, international relations, immigration, or views on security and terrorism. Where members of Congress stand on these inter-related issues plays an important role in the development of coalition building and engagement strategies to enact policy change.

State and Local Government Officials make up a fourth political/governmental stakeholder group who may be impacted by international travel to the U.S. via the economic, political, and cultural benefits associated with improved visa processing and increased tourism and travel. Alternatively, some in this group could view increased international travel or facilitation of visas to as a threat to local residents - particularly regarding issues of security and immigration.

A fifth stakeholder is **Political Advocacy Groups**. Whether these groups are pro or con travel, or even indirectly connected to the travel and tourism industry, increased travel impacts the lobbying and advocacy efforts of these groups. Like the previous stakeholder groups, determining where political advocacy groups stand on issues related to increased international travel to the U.S. can play an important role in coalition building and advocacy campaign development.

The final stakeholder group is **Foreign Governments**, who are impacted by the travel requirements set forth by the U.S. government. Decisions that ease or tighten restrictions that enable international travel can affect country specific perceptions of the U.S. and can impact political relationships, as well as have a direct impact on foreign citizens. As discussed above, Poland is an example of the political impact that visa policy decisions can have on diplomatic relations between countries. And, as discussed in the cultural and educational sector, increased travel can impact relational ties between International or Early-Generation Americans and their connected countries.

While this section considers, broadly, the impacts associated with increased international travel to the U.S. and considers the stakeholders that feel those impacts, we will now explore the types of impact - or, the benefits and costs of increased travel. This will provide further insight as to the political strengths of the stakeholders above. By understanding the sectors of impact, an advocacy campaign can then be designed that can leverage the associated benefits or costs in a way that informs messaging and positioning strategies, engagement strategies, and the coalition building strategies that are necessary for successful implementation of visa system improvements that work to enhance increased international travel to the U.S.

Benefit and Cost Considerations of Increased Travel

The following section identifies the benefits and costs that each group of stakeholders—economic, cultural/educational and government/political—face related to increased travel and lays the groundwork for a clearer picture of advocacy campaign allies and adversaries.

In developing an advocacy platform that functions to increase the number of international travelers to the U.S., understanding what is at stake for the complete set of diverse stakeholders is crucial to developing collaborative partnerships and engaging advocates for policy change and visa system improvements. It is important to note that many of the benefits or costs identified are mutually reinforcing across sectors and stakeholders - that an identified and quantified benefit in one sector, may also positively benefit a number of stakeholders in another.

What are the Economic Benefits of Increased Travel?

By collaboratively expanding current programs and creating innovative policies to draw more visitors to the U.S. without compromising domestic security, policymakers will be making direct and lasting contributions to U.S. economic growth. When visitors travel to the U.S. from abroad, they inject new money into our economy by staying in our hotels, spending at our stores, visiting our attractions, eating at our restaurants, or conducting business. Revenues produced here are considered exports on the U.S. balance sheet and represent critical contributions to our economy. For example:¹

- International travel generates \$2.1 trillion in economic output within the U.S.
- The economic output associated with travel in 2013 ranks second overall in U.S. exports
- In 2013, the travel industry was America's sixth-largest employer, employing 7.9 million individuals directly in transportation, hotels, restaurants, entertainment, and other sectors, the majority of which are good jobs that pay middle-class wages or better
- Including indirect effects, travel supported a total of 14.9 million workers across the country, accounting for one out of nine American jobs
- Fifteen percent of the travel industry's workforce is directly supported by the spending of international visitors to the U.S.
- Travel is among the top 10 industries in 49 states and Washington D.C. in terms of employment and these jobs operate at all levels of the employment ladder²
- After losing half a million jobs during the 2007-2009 recession, travel has created 757,000 jobs through mid-2014, outpacing job creation in the rest of the economy by 42 percent³

Increased international travel associated with business and conference travel also provides economic benefit. Many business leaders look upon international travel as a key component of global business operations. Increased international business and conference travel provides greater opportunities for face-to-face interaction where relationships are forged and ideas are generated. According to the U.S. Travel Association, for every dollar invested in business travel in 2012, businesses benefit from an average of \$9.50 in increased revenue and \$2.90 in new profits.

1 U.S. TRAVEL ANSWER SHEET. Retrieved from U.S. Travel Association website:

https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US_Travel_AnswerSheet_June_2014.pdf

2 Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism | U.S. Travel Association. Retrieved from,

<https://www.ustravel.org/government-affairs/travel-industry-economic-impact>

3 TRAVEL EXPORTS. Retrieved from U.S. Travel Association website:

https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/2014_Export_Report-PDF-FINAL.pdf

Industries outside the traditional travel and tourism stakeholder group benefit as well. One example is the healthcare industry. Specialty hospitals and clinics or medical destinations such as the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota benefit from increased access to international travel and are hurt by restrictions on travel. In a recent interview, Rochester restaurant owner, Joe Powers, explains this phenomenon: "Around the world, medical tourism is increasing in focus and competition. Rochester and Minnesota have an advantage and can build upon the Mayo Clinic brand strength and reputation of excellence. Our community is poised and ready to embrace the growth."¹ Although there are no solid statistics regarding the magnitude of medical tourism, available information suggests that a substantial number of patients travel to developed nations for healthcare. It is estimated, for example, that the medical tourism industry currently generates annual revenues up to \$60 billion, with 20% annual growth.²

What are the Economic Costs of Increased Travel?

While the upside to increased international travel is powerful, a strong advocacy platform must consider and understand the costs of increased international travel and the groups that may argue against it. Some of these costs may include the following:

- Increased environmental impact and footprint - air travel produces 19 times the greenhouse gas emissions of trains and 190 times of a ship³
- Increased traffic congestion, as traffic congestion erodes an estimated \$200 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) in the European Union (EU) and the US⁴
- Irresponsible and/or unsustainable development

According to the World Health Organization, increased travel reduces the access to globalization benefits for developing countries - as developed countries are able to take a more global approach to business and continue to progress, other low-income countries are further marginalized⁵

The environmental impact is of interest to a growing number of environmentalists and globally-centered citizens. Stakeholders from this environmental group have built a case that suggests increased travel carries significant negative environmental impacts. One advocacy organization, Green Choices, argues, "Tourism is also one of the greatest environmental threats, above all due to the impact of air travel. Aviation accounts for 75% of the industry's greenhouse gas emissions, followed by road transport (32%) and accommodation (21%)."⁶ Additionally, Blake Lee-Harwood, Campaigns Director for Greenpeace, said: "The simple fact is the boom in cheap air travel cannot be reconciled with the survival of those things we most value about the planet, and will ultimately kill millions of people. The only way to stop the problem is to reduce our flying."⁷

Other organizations, such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance, Travel Forever, and Sustainable Travel International are all mission-driven organizations working to make travel more sustainable - recognizing the impact and costs that increased travel produces. For example, Sustainable Travel International established a partnership with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. in 2008 to further its environmental stewardship efforts, with a focus on responsible tourism, education, and philanthropy.⁸

1 Rochester | DMC: Destination Medical Center Blog. Retrieved from, <http://dmc.mn/blog/tag/rochester/>

2 Medical Tourism: Globalization of the Healthcare Marketplace. Retrieved from, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2234298/>

3 Revealed: The real cost of air travel - Environment - The Independent. Retrieved from, <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/revealed-the-real-cost-of-air-travel-492356.html>

4 Connected World | Hyperconnected Travel and Transportation in Action. Retrieved from World Economic Forum website: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Connected_World_HyperconnectedTravelAndTransportationInAction_2014.pdf

5 WHO | Globalization. Retrieved from, <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story043/en/>

6 Green Choices - The environmental impact of air transportation. Retrieved from, <http://www.greenchoices.org/eco-holidays/environmental-impact-of-holidays/environmental-impacts>

7 Revealed: The real cost of air travel. Retrieved from, <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2005-05-28/revealed-real-cost-air-travel>

8 Sustainability Partnership with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. | Sustainable Travel International. Retrieved from, <http://sustainabletravel.org/project/royal-caribbean-cruises-ltd-sustainability-partners/>

While the strength of opposition here may be contended, we believe a successful advocacy platform is one that considers how to communicate and how to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders in meaningful ways. One way to do this is by collaboratively exploring issues of sustainability, green vacations, and eco-tourism.¹

What are the Cultural and Educational Benefits of Increased Travel?

The cultural benefits of increased travel are rich in tradition. Some of the benefits produced by international travel may include:

- Increased domestic opportunities for diversity and global awareness and these inform and strengthen political and economic benefits
- A connection point for families with international relatives and ties
- Improved academic and idea exchange
- Better learning outcomes: students who have traveled abroad show a greater aptitude for learning in all areas - 67% of students between 12-18 who participate in educational travel earn a college degree or higher, compared to only 34% of those who don't²
- Businesses are now serving an increasingly globalized set of customers, placing a greater value on intercultural knowledge in the workplace
- Increased support for domestic arts communities - i.e., Broadway, art festivals, music performance, etc.

As United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Affiliate Members, Javier Blanco and Peter Jordan explain, "Tourism is not just another sector of the economy. It is a human phenomenon that has social implications... provides the opportunity for millions of daily interactions between tourists and hosts to create diverse socio-cultural understanding."³

What are the Cultural and Educational Costs of Increased Travel?

Since the 1980s, traveling long distances has become more affordable for many people in the world. One of the cultural/educational costs that increased travel carries is the increased risk for health and disease:

- Increased dispersion of acute health concerns and chronic disease exposure: HIV, Hepatitis, Tuberculosis, Malaria, among others
- Increased threats of other global public health threats: Ebola, SARS, Swine Flu

According to a report issued by David F. Gordon, National Intelligence Officer for Economics and Global Issues in 2000, "The spread of infectious diseases results as much from changes in human behavior - including lifestyles and land use patterns, increased trade and travel, and inappropriate use of antibiotic drugs--as from mutations in pathogens."⁴ In addition, the report states that as many as twenty well-known diseases - including tuberculosis (TB), malaria, and cholera - have reemerged or spread geographically since 1973, often in more virulent and drug-resistant forms; and at least 30 previously unknown disease agents have been identified since 1973, including HIV, Ebola, hepatitis C, and Nipah virus, for which no cures are available. The report goes on to suggest that the persistent infectious disease burden is likely to aggravate and, in some cases, may even provoke economic decay, social fragmentation, and political destabilization in the hardest hit countries. And, with the U.S. as a major hub of global travel, the country will remain at risk from infectious diseases.

1 The World's Best Green Vacations - Forbes. Retrieved from, <http://www.forbes.com/2010/04/28/sustainable-adventure-travel-technology-ecotech-ecotourism.html>

2 Global education: benefits of student travel | The Educational Travel Blog by Explorica. Retrieved from, <http://www.explorica.com/blog/benefits-educational-travel>

3 The Global Infectious Disease Threat and Its Implications for the United States. Retrieved from, fas.org/irp/threat/nie99-17d.htm

4 Ibid.

What are the Political and Governmental Benefits of Increased Travel?

As discussed above, boundaries across political costs and benefits of international travel are less easily defined. With the variety of demands and priorities of stakeholders within the sector, increased travel may align or compete against them. For example, one government agency's function such as managing security (eg, DHS) may compete with another agency's priority, such as job creation (see: DOC). Both are impacted in some way by increased international travel, but the political benefit can be felt differently.

What is clear is this: both political and governmental benefits and costs make improving visa processing more complex than for many economic and cultural actors and stakeholders. And despite the competing demands or priorities of political and governmental stakeholders, understanding where boundaries exist and where there is mutual support allows for a deeper working knowledge of the various stakeholder positions of increased international travel to the U.S.

Some of the political and governmental benefits of increased travel include the following:¹

- Increased opportunities for diplomacy and to strengthen relationships (or remove irritants) between countries by easing visa restrictions or improving the visa process (Poland/China)
- Increased political understanding between nations
- Address demands by International and Early Generation Americans
- Increased political approval rating stemming from the economic and cultural benefits of increased international travel
- Collaboratively working to ease visa restrictions that enhance international travel presents opportunities to implement security protocols or enhancements through reciprocal travel agreements - such as the VWP
- Increased generation of government revenues - without the tax revenue generated by the travel and tourism industry, federal, state, and local budgets would be short \$133.9 billion in revenues²
- For the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs, a self-funded government operation, increased travel from countries where visas are required (such as China) means increased revenues associated with processed visa applications

The reciprocal B1 / B2 visa agreement that was struck recently between the U.S. and China is an example of leveraging collaboration to ease visa restrictions that enhance increased travel, in order to capture political and governmental benefit. According to the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Increasing business travel will support the President's goal of increasing exports."³ The press release goes on to explain, "Increasing visa validity for U.S. citizens traveling to China makes it easier to respond to market and commercial opportunities in China, helping to boost U.S. exports, foster increased trade ties, and improve commercial linkages between U.S. and Chinese firms. In the near term, extending visa validity for Chinese business travelers will also help meet the President's SelectUSA goal of boosting inward investment into the United States as the U.S. travel and tourism industry commits to making upfront investments in new hotels and other infrastructure in anticipation of a rise in Chinese inbound travel."⁴

Additionally, for the U.S. State Department, increasing visa validity also serves as a method for conserving limited consular resources. In particular, increasing visa validity could decrease the pace at which the U.S. Mission in China needs to hire, train, and deploy officers to adjudicate nonimmigrant visa applications, or help ensure adequate staffing to meet anticipated increases in demand.⁵

1 U.S. TRAVEL ANSWER SHEET. Retrieved from U.S. Travel Association website:

https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US_Travel_AnswerSheet_June_2014.pdf

2 Ibid.

3 FACT SHEET: Supporting American Job Growth And Strengthening Ties By Extending U.S./China Visa Validity for Tourists, Business Travelers, and Students | The White House. Retrieved from,

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/10/fact-sheet-supporting-american-job-growth-and-strengthening-ties-extendi>

4 Ibid.

5 U.S., China Agree on Longer Visa Validity (Updated) - U.S. & China Visa Law Blog | Chodorow Law Offices. Retrieved from, <http://lawandborder.com/u-s-china-reach-agreement-longer-business-tourist-student-visa-validity/>

What are the Political and Governmental Costs of Increased Travel?

With the political and governmental benefits of increased international travel, also come costs. Some of these political and governmental costs include:

- Increased concerns around safety and border control, linked to concerns about sovereignty
- Increased staffing, human resource capacity, and related costs of visa management and border control
- Increased technological capacity and associated cost
- Enforcing of government regulation regarding airport security, emissions, and taxes
- Strain on domestic relationships related to security and regulation, concerns surrounding illegal immigration and other border and security policy issues

The political benefits and costs of increased international travel can at times present a counter relationship to one another. For example, in exploring the methods of enhancing international travel to the U.S., there exist opportunities for increased security cooperation, including in exchanges of information on passengers and safeguarding of passports; however, it is these same issues of security that could be seen as a political cost. Accordingly, a successful advocacy campaign will consider the ways to leverage the political benefits that are created in a way that minimizes opportunities for opposition. This effort requires collaboration and open discussions between government agencies, political actors, and the private sector participation. The relationships here point to an opportunity for stakeholder engagement in an advocacy campaign - that if working collaboratively to a shared end, progress can be made that enhances opportunities for increased international travel. This notion, along with strategies for stakeholder engagement will be explored later in this report.

In developing and executing an advocacy strategy that works to ease visa restrictions and improve the visa system, understanding what is at stake for the complete set of diverse stakeholders is a crucial first step in developing the partnerships necessary for policy change and visa system improvements. This systematic approach to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of increased travel across the economic, cultural and educational, and political and governmental sectors, assists in formulating the best approaches for advocacy. We'll now consider a tool for mapping these considerations and identifying allies or adversaries across a continuum of support - the Position Map.

Position Map

A position map is a tool for assessing the importance of various stakeholders in an advocacy campaign and determining the impact each may have on desired outcomes. The technique involves considering each stakeholder's degree of potential influence on a decision or direction while also taking into account its existing position on the matter.

A position map is especially valuable when one is dealing with emotional or highly controversial issues, when it is important to anticipate specific positions or concerns in advance of the campaign. By knowing ahead of time which stakeholders are allies or adversaries of the campaign and why, it is possible to better tailor the partnership development and engagement necessary to achieve success. Based on the benefits and costs, and the vested stakeholders surrounding increased international travel, the position map below organizes the groups to measure political feasibility, as well as the political opportunities that may exist.

Campaign Allies:

Travel and Tourism Industry	TTAB and its members	
	Brand USA and its partners	
	The U.S. Travel Association and its partners	
	Transportation services	Airlines
		Cruise ships
		Rental cars
		Taxicabs
		Other
	Hospitality services	Hotels and resorts
		Booking agencies
	Entertainment venues	Amusement parks
		Casinos
		Shopping malls
		Music venues
		Theaters
	Dining services	Local restaurants
		Bars
		Other food related services
	Other businesses suppliers of goods for traveler purchases: souvenirs, clothing, and other related businesses	
Labor	UNITE HERE (The Union of Needletrades, Textiles, and Industrial Employees & the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union)	
	AFL-CIO	
	Other labor organizations related to travel and tourism	
Business Travel	Domestic conference planners	
	Local municipalities and city government	
Partners in Government	The White House and the Executive Branch	
	Department of Commerce	
	Department of State	
	Congress: key members with demonstrated interest	
	State and local governments in areas of potential tourist growth	
Policy Actors	Pro-Travel, Business, and Labor	
	Professional groups	
	Other advocates	
Universities		
International Americans	American citizens with family living in other countries	
	International or Early Generation Americans	
	American Ethnic Organizations	
Select foreign governments with track-record of political engagement on the issue		
Other Business Allies	Chamber of Commerce, both local and national branches	
	Small business owners	

The Moveable Middle:

Domestic-focused Americans or those citizens that are non-international travelers
Americans unaware of the issue or of the benefits associated with increased international travel
Working class taxpayers disconnected from or apathetic about the issue
State and local entities in the Midwest and other rural destinations not traditionally prioritized as destinations by international travelers
Front-line policy implementers such as TSA or Consulates
Policy actors not aware of the larger economic or cultural benefits of international travelers to the U.S.
Foreign governments with connections to International or Early Generation Americans

Campaign Adversaries:

Security-based Adversaries:	Department of Homeland Security
	Other Federal, state, and local law enforcement with concerns surrounding terroristic activity and illegal immigration
	Voters with strong concerns surrounding terroristic activity and illegal immigration
Members of Congress with record of opposition to greater opening of visa or entry process	
Those with health related concerns:	Dispersion of acute health and chronic disease exposure
	Global public health threats: Ebola, SARS, and Swine Flu
Environmentalists who have focused on the negative impacts of increased travel	
Anti-Globalization Advocates	
Policy Actors	Those that prioritize the issues raised above
	Those that believe the costs of increased international travel outweigh the benefits

A position map surrounding policy or system improvements that increase international travel to the U.S. helps to identify the types of coalition relationships that can be formed, as well as the adversaries for advocacy consideration. As detailed above, the coalition of supporters or allies in the effort to increase international travel is both larger and stronger politically than the others. This points to a significant opportunity in the campaign for visa system improvement and increased travel. It also points to the importance of making this a collaborative and cross-sector campaign - building a campaign of many voices.

Based on the impacts of increased travel and how stakeholders are affected, we now have a better understanding of the role in which stakeholder engagement strategies can play in building advocacy support.

Engaging Partners for Success:

The next step is to consider how to engage and sustaining the relationships for collaboration. Whether it is determined that advocacy is required for a particular visa system improvement, or for the increase of international travel more broadly, partnerships build influence and momentum in working toward a specific end goal. Some of the activities that could be thought of in actively pursuing these next steps include:

- Recruit, engage, and sustain stakeholder relationships
- Consider who is currently at the table and who needs to be
- Collaborate with non-traditional partners and stakeholders to capture new audiences
- Holding community and policy forums in conjunction with the U.S. State Department, Department of Commerce, TTAB board members, and other campaign allies
- Build communication and website materials to support the relationships established and the shared initiative
- Facilitate conversations

One tool that can be used in building an engagement strategy is the Collaboration Spectrum.¹ The Collaboration Spectrum provides further insight into the types of relationships that should be cultivated with each ally and helps to identify the type of relationship that various parties are willing and able to commit to one another. The spectrum is helpful in prioritizing which stakeholders to engage, to what extent they should be involved, and more broadly, provides a basis for consideration in creating sustainable and engaged relationships.

Relationship:	Networking	Coordinating	Cooperating	Collaborating
Definition:	Exchange information for	Exchange information for	Exchange information for	Exchange information for
		Altering activities to achieve a common purpose.	Altering activities to achieve a common purpose.	Altering activities to achieve a common purpose.
			Sharing resources to achieve a common purpose.	Sharing resources to achieve a common purpose.
				Enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose.

¹ Arthur T. Himmelman. COLLABORATION DEFINED: A Developmental Continuum of Change Strategies. Retrieved from HIMMELMAN Consulting website: https://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/4achange.pdf

Building a highly effective team is about creating common ground and closing any gaps. However, partners can have divided loyalties by nature. Accordingly, it is useful to look at partnering relationships as being on a collaboration spectrum. Where a partnering relationship fits on the spectrum depends on how much the parties need to collaborate, where their loyalties lie, and how much time they spend together. What the Collaboration Spectrum shows is that different types of partnering arrangements are appropriate for different sorts of collaboration.¹

Partnering is about getting beyond the transactional, and focusing on accomplishing the task at hand. By considering where stakeholders may fall on the Collaboration Spectrum, the output of the relationship can be maximized.

Engagement Best Practices

Engagement becomes the process by which the coalition is built. Detailed below are engagement best practices and the strategies and tactics for interacting with stakeholders, as adapted from Professor Tom Horner of the University of St. Thomas:²

Educate and Train

- People are more likely to engage when they understand an issue
- They are confident in their ability to communicate a policy position
- They feel a personal stake in the outcome

Create a Dialogue

- Transparency builds trust in the initiative
- Dialogue identifies weaknesses in strategies and messaging
- Conversation creates pathways to new solutions
- The best partnerships are based on shared values, shared authority

Values Alignment

- Keep your mission, values and vision top of mind
- Are the messages and the “ask” consistent with the values of the organization?
- Are you asking people to engage there are shared interests or because you have authority?

Effective Content

- Information about the future matters more than information about the past
- Personal examples are more motivating, inspire people with stories
- Share WHY something is being done, not just WHAT will be done
- Trust your partners with information that matters

Conducting an Internal “Values” Audit

- Know who you are, define the mission across the organization
- Live your values
- Substance first
- Content leads communications
- Be accountable - Internally and externally
- Rally your core, create ambassadors, create champions
- Engage, be collaborative, build relationships, build partnerships
- Be transparent
- Define, don’t defend
- Monitor and anticipate, prepare for the future
- Speak with one voice, be consistent in actions and words, integrate messages
- Activate, Motivate, and Engage

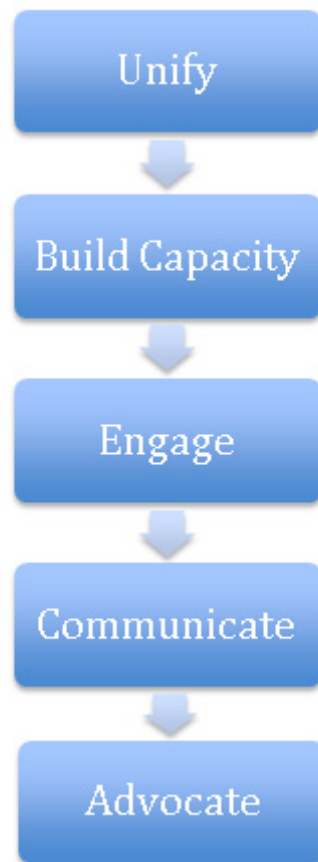
¹ The Collaboration Spectrum. Retrieved from Academy for Justice Commissioning website: <http://www.socia.co.uk/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/academy0609.pdf>

² “Aligning Public Affairs with the Organization’s Goals, then Planning for Success”. The University of St. Thomas, Public Affairs for Corporate Executives. Tom Horner, 2013.

SECTION FIVE: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORTING TACTICS

We have developed five core strategies for campaign development. The strategies are intended to provide a blueprint for building a successful advocacy campaign. Each strategy below includes an overview and then details actionable tactics that can be pursued as a means to implementing the particular strategy. Whether it is determined that advocacy is required for a particular visa system improvement, or for the increase of international travel more broadly, the five core strategies can be used to think through and develop the tactics necessary to achieve success.

The five core strategies include:



Core Strategy 1: Unify

The first core strategy, unify, focuses advocacy efforts on building a unified pursuit. The Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) should work to communicate a clear vision for the campaign, formalize campaign roles and responsibilities, and activate a broad base of allies.

In order to achieve success at this level, TTAB must first make sure that internal unification has occurred - that all board members are aligned and understand the campaign vision and plan. Additionally, as the campaign proceeds over time, it is important that each board member stay connected and vested in the campaign's success. Subsequent actions like expanding the coalition, communicating with various stakeholders, and advocating at the Capitol will be much less effective if partners are not directly involved and do not feel engaged, invested, and informed in either the vision or plan of action.

Recommended Action Items:

- Hold TTAB campaign-specific meetings regarding campaign priorities and the benefits of advocacy participation
- To help ensure internal unification, layout the plan of action and provide opportunities for feedback
- Provide opportunities for involvement at all levels - participation in conference calls and webinars surrounding the campaign, or through the creation of more formally structured positions of leadership and participation
- Collaboratively identify tasks and leaders in the execution of an advocacy campaign - create formal roles and responsibilities, and set expectations for participation
- Work to ensure that every board member is aware of the policy during the legislative session, and provide updates as needed
- Create an Advocacy Subcommittee to lead and implement these unification efforts¹

Measuring Success:

Success here can be measured in terms of the creation of a functioning and engaged Advocacy Subcommittee that is accountable to the larger board; and further, is one that is comprised of individuals with diverse skill sets tasked with defined roles. Additionally, success should also be measured by the Advocacy Subcommittee's efforts in developing a campaign vision that all existing TTAB members can get behind.

A more explicit way of measuring success might be a brief internal survey to TTAB members, asking if they feel informed and engaged in the campaign efforts, and the vision for advocacy. Additionally, once campaign roles are formalized, the Advocacy Subcommittee can solicit modest initial asks of supporters and track the conversion rate for successful completion.

Internal Analysis: Additional Factors to Consider

Achieving policy success requires a unified pursuit. The following questions can help provide an internal evaluation of the progress that is being made:

Across the organization...

- Is there clarity on priorities?
- Is there organizational buy-in at all levels?
- What trade-offs are will to be made in achieving advocacy goals?
- What are the accepted roles?
- Is there clarity on those roles?
- Is it known what it will cost in terms of money, resources, and time?
- Is it clear where financial resources are coming from?

"Aligning Public Affairs with the Organization's Goals, then Planning for Success"

**Public Affairs for Corporate Executives
Tom Horner, the University of St. Thomas**

¹ Per The U.S. Department of Commerce Charter of the U.S. TTAB: 11) Subcommittees. The Executive Director may establish subcommittees or working groups from among the Board members, in order to perform specific functions with the jurisdiction of the Board, subject to the provisions of FACA, the FACA implementing regulations, and applicable Department of Commerce guidance. Subcommittees must report back to the parent committee, and do not provide advice or work products directly to the Secretary.

Core Strategy 2: Build Internal Capacity

Building internal capacity is critical to the campaign's ability to effectively get its message out and build a broader coalition of support. Because TTAB members have responsibilities in their ownership or leadership positions within the private sector, it will be difficult for any one person or organization to take on a significant portion of the advocacy work. The formation of an Advocacy Subcommittee as discussed in Core Strategy 1: Unify, is a critical first step in the development of internal capacity. Additionally, a self-sustaining campaign that is able to capitalize on the organized efforts of many will be better equipped to carry out the remaining strategies necessary to achieve advocacy success.

To help the TTAB maximize available internal capacity-building opportunities, this section identifies ways to effectively utilize internal resources to build the capacity necessary for execution.

Recommended Action Items:

- Ask TTAB members and their organizational members to become public “Travel Advocates” - a stand alone team, that in conjunction with an Advocacy Subcommittee, is willing to work in support of the advocacy campaign
- “Travel Advocates” should lead capacity-building and organizing efforts at the local level - particularly strategic development and partner relations. (See: Position Map Allies & Core Strategy 3: Engage)
- Establish an internal communications system such as an electronic newsletter that highlights recent activities, or the inclusion of a Legislative Advocacy section on the TTAB website, to house all information related to this working group (a well-organized place for all “Travel Advocates” to access information and remain unified throughout the process)
- Work to establish a system of automation for execution of Advocacy Subcommittee and Travel Advocate capacity-building tasks:
 - Develop messaging for “Travel Advocates” to use in their own conversations within their local communities
 - Develop a standard presentation for use at open houses and other speeches that can be used at the local level, encouraging leaders to become involved
- Publicly recognize the efforts of “Travel Advocate” efforts and share in their success

Measuring Success:

Performance measures around this core strategy can be measured by day-to-progress that moves advocacy efforts closer to a unified and capacity rich campaign. TTAB could evaluate its success based on the number of board members who have opted into a formal request to become “Travel Advocates”. The number of local meetings or events held could also measure performance, as well as the number of “Travel Advocates” these events produce. In working to build internal capacity, success could also be measured in terms of progress made toward automation - that task designation and execution of tasks be shared across the many vested stakeholders that wish to enact change.

Core Strategy 3: Engage

As the campaign enters the engage phase, TTAB should reposition its internal capacity-building activities to focus externally in sharing this vision with broader stakeholders, and growing its base of supporters. Those supporters may be formal coalition partners, businesses or institutions, or even indirect supporters who agree with the policy goals and vision set forth by the TTAB Advocacy Subcommittee. Some partners, those determined to be “Collaborating Partners” by using the Collaboration Spectrum in the previous section of the report, should be leveraged to design and lead various work streams. This also helps in building capacity for tactical execution.

In this strategy, TTAB should engage key audiences in a variety of ways from one-on-one meetings to speeches to town halls. Engagement will involve a great deal of education. Accordingly, the primary request TTAB and the Advocacy Subcommittee should make of its supporters at this level, surrounds partnership development and communicating externally the goals of the campaign.

As the initiative progresses, the engagement efforts will actually begin to overlap with Core Strategy 5: Advocate, in which supporters begin to take direct action with legislators. Before this, however, the TTAB must successfully activate a broader level of awareness and work diligently to expand the coalition externally.

Recommended Action Items:

- Partnership development with economic stakeholders:
 - Tourism and Travel Industry
 - Labor
 - Other campaign allies (see: Position Map)
 - Consider further collaboration with the U.S. Travel Association
- Partnership development with cultural and educational stakeholders
 - Colleges and Universities
 - International and First Generation Americans
 - Other cultural and educational stakeholders
- Partnership development with political and governmental partners where applicable:
 - U.S. Members of Congress
 - Domestic interest groups (see: Appendix A for sample inventory of Polish-American Political Stakeholders)
- Establish a communication system for external partners - e-campaign and legislative updates, new partnership announcements, industry news, etc. - keeping partners engaged and moving forward
- Hold a series of informational and networking forums hosted by “Travel Advocates” at TTAB hotels, properties, or businesses. These open houses should invite businesses, universities, elected officials, and other campaign allies to learn about the campaign and to get involved. These informational forums would allow individuals to connect to the campaign and one another - strengthening the advocacy network and coalition of support at local and regional levels.
- Plan a larger national event in Washington D.C. that brings together all TTAB members, and stakeholders prior to the legislative session. Invite advocates, legislators, and leaders from around the country as well. This type of event could be a culminating showcase event and celebrates cumulative campaign efforts and asks attendees for help making a legislative push.
- Assign an “External Relations” position within the Advocacy Subcommittee with the task of organizing and leading outreach efforts with organizations, elected officials, and other stakeholders
- Support partnership development with tactics from Core Strategy 4: Communicate - Social media, website, blogs, other information-sharing techniques that connect partners
- Set a specific goals for progress and communicate a sense of community

Measuring Success:

Evaluation of success here can take many forms. Engagement metrics typically involve measuring interactions with people - or the actual conversations that the campaign has with stakeholders around the country. While measuring conversations can be rather subjective in nature, some of the more fundamental methods of measuring engagement include the following:

- Number of members or participants in the coalition
- Number of informational forums or events held and the number of attendees
- Number of community leaders met with in groups and one-on-one
- Number of speaking opportunities and meetings that arise from phases of the external engagement activities
- Increased issue awareness at the local level
- “Likes” on Facebook, “Followers” on Twitter, and the related partnership activity in those forums

For each task, set a goal, support the goal, and collaboratively work with partners to achieve it. As the network of support continues to grow, leverage individual supporters as resources and create the structure for supporters to help you achieve goals by assigning them specific tasks. And as the campaign moves forward over time, adjust the metrics used for measuring success to reflect campaign needs and goals.

Core Strategy 4: Communicate

This strategy extends throughout the entire life of the campaign, but it can be segmented into three distinct phases. In the first phase, communications efforts should be informal, largely conversations among internal supporters and allies. As the campaign moves from the Unify initiative to the Engage strategy, the communications tasks begin appear publicly and speak broadly to the advocacy vision and legislative goals through e-mail marketing, speeches, press releases, etc. Finally, as the campaign subsequently enters the Advocate, the communications efforts ramp up yet again with activities such as an official launch event, an announcement of the coalition partners and supporters, a Lobby Day at the Capitol, increased digital presence, and media news releases, to name a few.

A member of the Advocacy Subcommittee should own the communications strategy and work with TTAB staff, “Travel Advocates”, and other partners who can help to manage the campaign with limited day-to-day staff oversight. Communications activities should include digital efforts (via e-mail marketing, social media and updating the website), writing press releases and interacting with media outlets, developing presentations and speeches, creating campaign literature, writing testimony and finalizing talking points for different audiences. In executing communications strategy, it is recommended that a communications calendar be developed that lays out who the TTAB is communicating with, when the TTAB is to communicate with them, and what will be communicated. This calendar should coordinate with local events and community happenings that align with the campaign’s goals.

A key task here for communications are to create a greater public awareness and interest in the advocacy campaign and the broader issues related to increased travel. Communications should support moving the general public and stakeholders through the following continuum: create awareness, build a sense of urgency, and then take action. Communicate the benefits of increased travel to the general public and detail what is at stake.

Recommended Action Items:

- Work in concert with Brand USA in developing and executing communications and marketing; leverage the U.S. Travel Association and resources where possible
- Assemble a press release/media list that includes major market media outlets, all contacts in key communities
- Meet with local newspaper editors to discuss the issue and the campaign; ask them to write op/eds about the subject
- Schedule presentations at businesses, local Rotary Clubs, cultural institutions, colleges and universities and other civic organizations to educate, inform, and recruit supporters and advocates (delegate to local Travel Advocates where possible)
- Host conference calls or webinars to allow supporters or interested individuals to tune in and hear the latest progress of the campaign
- Design or modify existing leave-behind literature (e.g. brochure) for events and meetings
- Create a communications calendar that thoughtfully sequences key messages that need to be conveyed throughout the campaign, displaying the channels, audiences, and specifying any necessary tasks.

- TTAB website updates and changes are needed. An updated, stand-alone website should accommodate campaign and advocacy information - making it a resource page for stakeholders, but also is a site that provides the basic information in a way that informs future information seekers. Some key web elements to consider include:
 - Advocacy Toolkit: a section that provides the talking points and resources needed to become a “Travel Advocate”
 - A “Join the Campaign” section that details future policy goals and efforts, and allows stakeholders to sign-up for advocacy updates or volunteering
 - Customized and original content:
 - TTAB blog posts that highlight care issues and work
 - Advocacy blog posts that highlight the work being done to make policy change and increase international travel
 - Profiles highlighting a “Travel Advocate” or a TTAB member each month that is making a difference in advocacy efforts
 - Share success stories and testimonials
 - Work with Brand USA in the development of a website and content; consider the U.S. Travel Association’s Power of Travel Coalition (see: Travelcoalition.org)
- Leverage social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to drive traffic and awareness of advocacy and the effort at large:
 - Schedule Facebook and Twitter posts in concert with news releases, events, and press coverage
 - Devote time and resources to attracting new followers and engagement
 - Convert these followers into formal supporters and email subscribers
- Consider how celebrity International or Early Generation Americans as activists may contribute their voice to the matter:
 - Charlize Theron and Dave Matthews, former citizens of South Africa
 - Salma Hayek, former citizen and illegal immigrant of Mexico - known immigration activist
 - Alan Cumming the British actor of The Good Wife - known political activist, became a U.S. citizen to vote for President Obama
 - Pierce Brosnan and Liam Neeson, former citizens of Ireland
 - Wolfgang Puck, former citizen of Austria
 - Sofia Vergara of Modern Family, current citizen of Columbia
 - Professional athletes: Baseball, hockey, and basketball in particular, as there are more well-know international athletes at the pro-level than other sports
- Automate communications where possible:
 - Develop messaging that allows supporters to conduct their own conversations in their communities
 - Develop a standard presentation for use at open houses and other speeches
- Recruit a person on the Advocacy Subcommittee with communications and public relations skills who can take the lead as campaign “Communications Chair”
- Assign TTAB organizational employees, interns, or student groups with the tasks that flow from strategy set by the Advocacy Subcommittee and the Communications Chair

Measuring Success:

Measuring communications success involves a blend of both quantitative and qualitative tools. Some of the metrics that can be used to evaluate communications efforts include:

- Open rates and conversion rates on email communications
- Use A/B testing to determine the right day and time in which emails should be sent to different audiences
- Number of subscribers/nonsubscribers to email lists
- Number of social media followers, and more importantly, the level of their engagement
- Percentage of attendees at events that are getting involved and taking action
- Local media mentions and news stories
- Percentage of general awareness and support in polling

Core Strategy 5: Advocate

The fifth core strategy and final phase of the TTAB work-plan revolves around advocacy. This phase comes at a time after which the vision of the campaign has been clearly communicated to supporters. Advocate represents the phase in which natural allies and supporters are triggered into action and “Travel Advocates” take on a variety of advocacy tasks and actions.

Due to the TTAB’s limited capacity, developing a grassroots advocacy network is paramount to legislative success. Fortunately, TTAB can immediately begin maximizing the “grassroots power” that is created by active, engaged stakeholders and partners through the execution of scalable advocacy actions and activities. The following recommended action items are intended to offer the TTAB an opportunity to consider the components of the larger advocacy strategy for future implementation.

Recommended Action Items:

- Hold regional or local volunteer training sessions to arm supporters with information on how to talk about the issue in their own communities and help identify opportunities for the TTAB Advocacy Subcommittee to share its message with new audiences
- In coordination with the TTAB Advocacy Subcommittee, identify and establish local and regional advocacy captains to champion these efforts at the local level
- Meet with legislators and local elected officials who need to be armed with information
- Persuade community leaders and/or elected officials to host their own open houses and advertise them through local media and organization newsletters
- Identify politically powerful stakeholders and build and/or strengthen relationships with such actors (See: Position Map)
- Identify legislative advocates early and use them to build a public profile:
 - Have them speak at town halls
 - Sign their name to campaign communications
 - Ask them to write constituents for support via constituent email updates or newspaper op-eds
- Develop advocacy-focused communications tools and methods that can be used for raising awareness nationwide:
 - Press releases and Letter to The Editor (LTE) of support, endorsements, and other milestones
 - Coordinate email, letter, and phone communications to legislators
 - Support local advocate conversations with co-workers, neighbors, schools, and others by providing them with materials, talking points, and literature
 - During session and after elections, make it a priority to educate and inform at the Capitol
 - Leverage resources and materials created by the U.S. Travel Association’s Power of Travel Coalition
- Educate and train stakeholders to raise issue awareness, build advocacy skills among the larger support base:
 - Openly communicate the session strategy – coordinate internal and external stakeholders to work in concert with Legislative Champions identified and matched prior to the session start
 - “Travel Advocates” to host regional or local advocacy training sessions - bring in lobbyist/consultant to do trainings (a board member with considerable lobbying expertise could help with this effort)
 - Create Advocacy Toolkits – easy to implement, do-it-yourself advocacy information and resources for key internal and external stakeholders
 - Establish Advocate Appreciation Days - giving thanks to those that continue to be champions and advocates for the campaign

- Plan, promote, and implement grassroots political actions and events before and during the Legislative Session, including:
 - International Travel Day at the Capitol
 - Letters with signatures to political and governmental stakeholders asking them to consider their support
 - Leverage the TTAB network to build relationships with local elected officials and legislative supporters

Measuring Success:

Because campaign successes are frequently driven by the efforts of committed members and volunteers willing to dedicate personal time and skills to advancing a cause they care about, advocacy success should not only be evaluated based on whether policy change occurs. The TTAB should instead view success as each new person reached - either educated about increased international travel to the U.S., or actively engaged in deeper levels of advocacy through volunteering. With this in mind, the TTAB has a number of possible metrics to select from in monitoring and tracking advocacy progress over time, including:

- Number of letters sent to legislators
- Number of emails sent to legislators
- Number of legislative visits
- Number of volunteers who show up to an event to advocate
- Number volunteer hours to recruit new supporters
- Number of volunteers and hours contributed to the campaign
- Track open and response rates for legislative and advocacy related emails and other communication modes selected for advocacy such as direct mail, social media, and others

Strategy Development Overview

The five core strategies identified are intended to provide the TTAB with a blueprint to build a successful, collaborative advocacy campaign. Across the timeline, actionable tactics take shape and present themselves as a means to accomplishing organizational and campaign goals.

Unify

Solidify inter-organizational policy goals and the campaign's mission and vision. This includes all TTAB board members, and internal stakeholders as identified within. This team pulling collectively in the same direction can be politically powerful and influential.



Build Internal Capacity

In order to run a successful and sustainable campaign, the TTAB must build the internal capacity necessary to support continued advocacy efforts and to enact change.



Engage

Engage stakeholders, focus on relationship building, and leverage these networks in collaboration. Build the relationships and pursue collaborative initiatives needed to expand the network of external support.



Communicate

Build content, awareness, and connections through coordinated and strategic conversations.



Advocate

Coordinate, manage, and deploy the legislative and advocacy strategy that shapes opinions and builds support.

CONCLUSION

The travel and tourism industry significantly benefits the United States in economic, cultural and political ways. Recognizing the importance of this industry, President Obama called for a task force to be formed, in 2012, to discover ways in which the U.S. could increase its competitiveness in the world's international travel market. The goal of welcoming 100 million international travelers annually by the end of 2021 is ambitious but achievable. The efforts toward this goal will be aided by improvements to administrative, legislative and management levels of the visa application and issuance processes. By addressing the recommendations detailed in this report, the U.S. will see an increase in international travel.

Appendix A: Poland-U.S., Political Stakeholders

City	Polish Population #	Percent of City's Total Pop.	Senators	House Reps.
New York City, New York - 213,447 (2.7%). ^[1]	213,447	2.7%	Kirsten Gillibrand D-NY Charles Schumer D-NY	Timothy Bishop, Pete King, Steve Israel, Carolyn McCarthy, Gregory Meeks, Grace Meng, Nydia Velazquez, Hakeem Jeffries, Yvette Clarke, Jerrold Nadler, Michael Grimm, Carolyn Maloney, Charles Rangel, Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Eliot Engel, Nita Lowey, Sean Patrick Maloney, Chris Gibson, Paul Tonko, Bill Owens, Richard Hanna, Tom Reed, Daniel Maffei, Louise Slaughter, Brian Higgins, Chris Collins
Chicago, Illinois - 210,421 (7.3%). ^[2]	210,421	7.3%	Richard Durbin D-IL Mark Kirk R-IL	Bobby Rush, Robin Kelly, Daniel Lipinski, Luis Gutierrez, Mike Quigley, Peter Roskam, Danny Davis, Tammy Duckworth, Jan Schakowsky, Brad Schneider, Bill Foster, William Enyart, Rodney Davis, Randy Hultgren, John Shimkus, Adam Kinzinger, Cheri Bustos, Aaron Schock
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - 65,508 (4.3%). ^[3]	65,508	4.3%	Robert Casey D-PA Patrick Toomey R-PA	Robert Brady, Chaka Fattah, Mike Kelly, Scott Perry, Glenn Thompson, Jim Gerlach, Pat Meehan, Michael Fitzpatrick, Bill Shuster, Tom Marino, Lou Barletta, Keith Rothfus, Allyson Schwartz, Mike Doyle, Charles Dent, Joseph Pitts, Matthew Cartwright, Tim Murphy
Milwaukee, Wisconsin - 57,485 (9.6%). ^[4]	57,485	9.6%	Tammy Baldwin D-WI Ron Johnson R-WI	Paul Ryan, Mark Pocan, Ron Kind, Gwen Moore, James Sensenbrenner, Thomas Petri, Sean Duffy, Reid Ribble

Los Angeles, California - 56,670 (1.5%). ^[6]	56,670	1.5%	Barbara Boxer D-CA Dianne Feinstein D-CA	Doug LaMalfa, Jared Huffman, John Garamendi, Tom McClintock, Mike Thompson, Doris Matsui, Ami Bera, Paul Cook, Jerry McNerney, Jeff Denham, George Miller, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Lee, Jackie Speier, Eric Swalwell, Jim Costa, Mike Honda, Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Sam Farr, David Valadao, Devin Nunes, Kevin McCarthy, Lois Capps, Buck McKeon, Julia Brownley, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Tony Cardenas, Brad Sherman, Gary Miller Grace Napolitano, Henry Waxman, Xavier Becerra, Gloria Negrete McLeod, Raul Ruiz, Karen Bass, Linda Sanchez, Ed Royce, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Mark Takano, Ken Calvert, Maxine Waters, Janice Hahn, John Campbell, Loretta Sanchez, Alan Lowenthal, Dana Rohrabacher, Darrell Issa, Duncan Hunter, Juan Vargas, Scott Peters, Susan Davis
Cheektowaga (town), New York - 37,560 (39.9%). ^[6]	37,560	39.9%	Kirsten Gillibrand D-NY Charles Schumer D-NY	Timothy Bishop, Pete King, Steve Israel, Carolyn McCarthy, Gregory Meeks, Grace Meng, Nydia Velazquez, Hakeem Jeffries, Yvette Clarke, Jerrold Nadler, Michael Grimm, Carolyn Maloney, Charles Rangel, Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Eliot Engel, Nita Lowey, Sean Patrick Maloney, Chris Gibson, Paul Tonko, Bill Owens, Richard
Buffalo, New York - 34,254 (11.7%). ^[7]	34,254	11.7%	Kirsten Gillibrand D-NY Charles Schumer D-NY	Timothy Bishop, Pete King, Steve Israel, Carolyn McCarthy, Gregory Meeks, Grace Meng, Nydia Velazquez, Hakeem Jeffries, Yvette Clarke, Jerrold Nadler, Michael Grimm, Carolyn Maloney, Charles Rangel, Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Eliot Engel, Nita Lowey, Sean Patrick Maloney, Chris Gibson, Paul Tonko, Bill Owens, Richard

Phoenix, Arizona - 32,050 (2.4%). ^[8]	32,050	2.4%	Jeff Flake R-AZ John McCain R-AZ	Ann Kirkpatrick, Ron Barber, Raul Grijalva, Paul Gosar, Matt Slamon, David Schweikert, Ed Pastor, Trent Franks, Kyrsten Sinema
Toledo, Ohio - 31,792 (10.1%). ^[9]	31,792	10.1%	Sherrod Brown D-OH Rob Portman R-OH	Steve Chabot, Brad Wenstrup, Joyce Beatty, Jim Jordan, Robert Latta, Bill Johnson, Bob Gibbs, John Boehner, Marcy Kaptur, Michael Turner, Marcia Fudge, Pat Tiberi, Tim Ryan, David Joyce, Steve Stivers, Jim Renacci
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - 28,178 (8.4%). ^[10]	28,178	8.4%	Robert Casey D-PA Patrick Toomey R-PA	Robert Brady, Chaka Fattah, Mike Kelly, Scott Perry, Glenn Thompson, Jim Gerlach, Pat Meehan, Michael Fitzpatrick, Bill Shuster, Tom Marino, Lou Barletta, Keith Rothfus, Allyson Schwartz, Mike Doyle, Charles Dent, Joseph Pitts, Matthew Cartwright, Tim Murphy
San Diego, California - 25,201 (2.1%). ^[11]	25,201	2.1%	Barbara Boxer D-CA Dianne Feinstein D-CA	Doug LaMalfa, Jared Huffman, John Garamendi, Tom McClintock, Mike Thompson, Doris Matsui, Ami Bera, Paul Cook, Jerry McNerney, Jeff Denham, George Miller, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Lee, Jackie Speier, Eric Swalwell, Jim Costa, Mike Honda, Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Sam Farr, David Valadao, Devin Nunes, Kevin McCarthy, Lois Capps, Buck McKeon, Julia Brownley, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Tony Cardenas, Brad Sherman, Gary Miller Grace Napolitano, Henry Waxman, Xavier Becerra, Gloria Negrete McLeod, Raul Ruiz, Karen Bass, Linda Sanchez, Ed Royce, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Mark Takano, Ken Calvert, Maxine Waters, Janice Hahn, John Campbell, Loretta Sanchez, Alan Lowenthal, Dana Rohrabacher, Darrell Issa, Duncan Hunter, Juan Vargas, Scott Peters, Susan Davis

Cleveland, Ohio - 22,978 (4.8%).^[12]	22,978	4.8%	Sherrod Brown D-OH Rob Portman R-OH	Steve Chabot, Brad Wenstrup, Joyce Beatty, Jim Jordan, Robert Latta, Bill Johnson, Bob Gibbs, John Boehner, Marcy Kaptur, Michael Turner, Marcia Fudge, Pat Tiberi, Tim Ryan, David Joyce, Steve Stivers, Jim Renacci
Houston, Texas - 19,290 (1%).^[13]	19,290	1.0%	John Cornyn R-TX Ted Cruz R-TX	Louie Gohmert, Ted Poe, Sam Johnson, Ralph Hall, Jeb Hensarling, Joe Barton, John Culberson, Kevin Brady, Al Gree, Michael McCaul, Michael Conaway, Kay Granger, Mac Thornberry, Randy Weber, Ruben Hinojosa, Beto O'Rourke, Bill Flores, Sheila Jackson Lee, Randy Neugebauer, Joaquin Castro, Lamar Smith, Pete Olson, Pete Gallego, Kenny Marchant, Roger Williams, Michael Burgess, Blake Farenthold, Henry Cuellar, Gene Green, Eddie Bernice Johnson, John Carter, Pete Sessions, Marc Veasey, Filemon Vela, Lloyd Doggett, Steve Stockman
Detroit, Michigan - 18,992 (2.0%).^[14]	18,992	2.0%	Carl Levin D-MI Debbie Stabenow D-MI	Dan Benishek, Bill Huizenga, Justin Amash, Dave Camp, Daniel Kildee, Fred Upton, Tim Walberg, Mike Rogers, Sander Levin, Candice Miller, Kerry Bentivolio, John Dingell, John Conyers Jr., Gary Peters
Omaha, Nebraska - 18,447.^[15]	18,447		Deb Fischer R-NE Mike Johanns R-NE	Jeff Fortenberry, Lee Terry, Adrian Smith
Baltimore, Maryland - 18,400 (2.8%).^[16]	18,400	2.8%	Benjamin Cardin D-MD Barbara Mikulski D-MD	Andy Harris, Dutch Ruppersberger, John Sarbanes, Donna Edwards, Steny Hoyer, John Delaney, Elijah Cummings, Chris Van Hollen

Parma, Ohio - 15,503 (18.1%). ^[17]	15,503	18.1%	Sherrod Brown D-OH Rob Portman R-OH	Steve Chabot, Brad Wenstrup, Joyce Beatty, Jim Jordan, Robert Latta, Bill Johnson, Bob Gibbs, John Boehner, Marcy Kaptur, Michael Turner, Marcia Fudge, Pat Tiberi, Tim Ryan, David Joyce, Steve Stivers, Jim Renacci
Grand Rapids, Michigan - 15,442 (7.8%). ^[18]	15,442	7.8%	Carl Levin D-MI Debbie Stabenow D-MI	Dan Benishek, Bill Huizenga, Justin Amash, Dave Camp, Daniel Kildee, Fred Upton, Tim Walberg, Mike Rogers, Sander Levin, Candice Miller, Kerry Bentivolio, John Dingell, John Conyers Jr., Gary Peters
Amherst, New York - 15,136 (13%). ^[19]	15,136	13.0%	Kirsten Gillibrand D-NY Charles Schumer D-NY	Timothy Bishop, Pete King, Steve Israel, Carolyn McCarthy, Gregory Meeks, Grace Meng, Nydia Velazquez, Hakeem Jeffries, Yvette Clarke, Jerrold Nadler, Michael Grimm, Carolyn Maloney, Charles Rangel, Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Eliot Engel, Nita Lowey, Sean Patrick Maloney, Chris Gibson, Paul Tonko, Bill Owens, Richard Hanna, Tom Reed, Daniel Maffei, Louise Slaughter, Brian Higgins, Chris Collins
Erie, Pennsylvania - 14,718 (14.2%). ^[20]	14,718	14.2%	Robert Casey D-PA Patrick Toomey R-PA	Robert Brady, Chaka Fattah, Mike Kelly, Scott Perry, Glenn Thompson, Jim Gerlach, Pat Meehan, Michael Fitzpatrick, Bill Shuster, Tom Marino, Lou Barletta, Keith Rothfus, Allyson Schwartz, Mike Doyle, Charles Dent, Joseph Pitts, Matthew Cartwright, Tim Murphy

San Antonio, Texas - 14,475 (1.3%). ^[21]	14,475	1.3%	John Cornyn R-TX Ted Cruz R-TX	Louie Gohmert, Ted Poe, Sam Johnson, Ralph Hall, Jeb Hensarling, Joe Barton, John Culberson, Kevin Brady, Al Gree, Michael McCaul, Michael Conaway, Kay Granger, Mac Thornberry, Randy Weber, Ruben Hinojosa, Beto O'Rourke, Bill Flores, Sheila Jackson Lee, Randy Neugebauer, Joaquin Castro, Lamar Smith, Pete Olson, Pete Gallego, Kenny Marchant, Roger Williams, Michael Burgess, Blake Farenthold, Henry Cuellar, Gene Green, Eddie Bernice Johnson, John Carter, Pete Sessions, Marc Veasey, Filemon Vela, Lloyd Doggett, Steve Stockman
San Francisco, California - 14,332 (1.8%). ^[22]	14,332	1.8%	Barbara Boxer D-CA Dianne Feinstein D-CA	Doug LaMalfa, Jard Huffman, John Garamendi, Tom McClintock, Mike Thompson, Doris Matsui, Ami Bera, Paul Cook, Jerry McNerney, Jeff Denham, George Miller, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Lee, Jackie Speier, Eric Swalwell, Jim Costa, Mike Honda, Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Sam Farr, David Valadao, Devin Nunes, Kevin McCarthy, Lois Capps, Buck McKeon, Julia Brownley, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Tony Cardenas, Brad Sherman, Gary Miller Grace Napolitano, Henry Waxman, Xavier Becerra, Gloria Negrete McLeod, Raul Ruiz, Karen Bass, Linda Sanchez, Ed Royce, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Mark Takano, Ken Calvert, Maxine Waters, Janice Hahn, John Campbell, Loretta Sanchez, Alan Lowenthal, Dana Rohrabacher, Darrell Issa, Duncan Hunter, Juan Vargas, Scott Peters, Susan Davis

Appendix B: Town Hall Survey

1. What is your home country?
2. Before coming to the United States to study, how many times did you travel outside of your home country?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. 2-3
 - d. 4-5
 - e. 6+
3. How many times have you applied for a U.S. Visa?
4. Which type(s) of visas have you applied for?
5. Have you ever been rejected for a U.S. Visa?
If so, how many times?
If so, which type?
If so, how soon did you re-apply?
6. Compared to other countries you are familiar with, how easy would you say it is to travel to the U.S?
(Very easy to Nearly impossible)
 - a. Very easy
 - b. Easy
 - c. The same
 - d. Difficult
 - e. Nearly impossible
7. What factors do you think make it difficult to travel to the U.S?
 - a. Cost of visa
 - b. Getting to your face-to-face interview
 - c. Security entry check
 - d. Wait time
 - e. Other visa issue (please list) _____
 - f. It wasn't difficult to travel to the U.S.
8. During the visa process, which of the following was the most difficult for you?
 - a. Traveling a long distance
 - b. Covering the cost of the process
 - c. Preparing document
 - d. Length of process
9. Using the 1-5 scale below, rate the customer service experience at the consulate that you performed your in-person interview?
 - 5) It was great
 - 4) It was above average
 - 3) It was average
 - 2) It was is below average
 - 1) It was poor
10. Why?
11. Do you have friends that want to come to U.S but cannot get a visa?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, what are the reasons for them not getting visas?

If yes, did they choose to travel to a different country instead? Please list the country.
12. If you did not get the U.S visa where would you visit instead?
13. What suggestions do you have for visa system improvement in your home country?

Appendix C: Hospitality and Tourist Labor Chart

Hospitality and Tourism Career Cluster

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Jobs in the hospitality and tourism career cluster involve planning, managing, and providing lodging, food, recreation, conventions, and tourism, and related planning and support services such as travel-related services.

SOURCE: V-TECS.

Career Pathways The hospitality and tourism career cluster contains four career pathways. What skills are necessary to work in each pathway? Which pathway appeals to you the most?



Career Clusters Hospitality and Tourism

Source: http://www.glencoe.com/sec/careers/cclusters/pdf/cluster_hospitality.pdf

Appendix D: Increasing Travel: By the Numbers

International travel provides tremendous benefits to the U.S. economy – facilitating exports, creating jobs, and supporting travel and entertainment related businesses across our country. To foster growth in this industry, President Obama, through Executive Order, launched the National Travel and Tourism Strategy in 2012. This strategy, designed to make the U.S. a more attractive and accessible destination, calls for increasing international visitors to the U.S. to 100 million by 2021.

The contributions made by international tourism and travel positively impact the U.S. economy. More specifically, in 2012, tourism contributed \$161.2 billion to U.S. exports, representing 7.3 percent of total U.S. exports, and nearly 25 percent of all service exports (Table 1 & 2). In terms of U.S. service exports in 2012, travel and tourism contributes 28 percent more to the trade balance than intellectual property, 110 percent more than financial services, and 402 percent more than computers and electronic products (Table 2 & Figure 1). And since 2008, travel and tourism exports have increased \$27.5 billion, a 20 percent increase by 2012 (Table 1).

Additionally, the U.S. leads all countries in international tourism expenditure (Figure 2). In 2012, the U.S. produced \$200 billion in receipts from international travelers. This represents a 34 percent increase - up \$50 billion since 2009. Interestingly, the 3 countries that directly follow the U.S. in expenditures, receive less than the U.S. when combined - as France and Spain received just over \$63 billion respectively, and China received \$54 billion in total receipts. The overall contribution of tourism to U.S. exports and the growth of U.S. tourism expenditures shed light on the reason for action set out by President Obama.

And while international visitors to the U.S. rose to 66 million in 2012 (from 62 million in 2011) increasing the economic benefit of tourism by 15 percent, there remains room for growth. As detailed below (Figure 3), the U.S. has consistently ranked 2nd behind France over time. In 2012, more than 83 million international tourists and travelers visited France, compared to the 66 million tourists that visited the U.S. – 20 percent more travelers than the U.S. In comparison, the U.S. has just 13 percent more travelers than both China and Spain. Additionally, overall international travel is increasing rapidly. Since 2010, travel to the top 5 most visited countries has increased by 22 million; however, the 4 top U.S. competing markets for travel captured 68 percent of this total growth, and the U.S. market share of increased travelers only increased by 7 million travelers during this same time. Further, the number of international travelers coming to the U.S. was just 6 percent of the worldwide market, a decrease from 8 percent of the global market share in 1995.

Also signifying the opportunity for economic growth associated increasing international travel to the U.S., is that total expenditures by international travelers have increased 168 percent in the last 17 years (from \$483 billion in 1995 to \$1.2 trillion in 2012). Unfortunately, the U.S. has not grown as aggressively, increasing by 113 percent - from \$93 billion in 1995 to \$200 billion in 2012 (Figure 4). Additionally, in 1995, the U.S. held 19 percent of the total market for international travel and tourism expenditure. In 2012, however, that market share for tourism expenditure dropped to 15 percent. Not only has the U.S. not kept the same pace of growth as seen internationally for expenditure, the U.S. has actually lost 4 percent market share of travel expenditure between 1995 and 2012. As stated in the National Travel and Tourism Strategy, “While the United States set records for international visitation in four of the last five years, the global travel market has become increasingly competitive. Other countries actively market themselves, and new destinations are aggressively competing for market share.” With more international travelers entering the market each year, there is tremendous room for growth in international travel to the U.S.

Considering the growing market and the benefits related to international travel, efforts must be made for the U.S. to capture their share of this growing market. By collaboratively addressing issues with leaders from both public and private sectors, the U.S. can grow its travel and tourism related industries to stimulate economic growth. The global race for international travelers is on. The time for collaborative action is now.

“As a travel destination, no other nation can compete with the diversity of experiences found across the United States and its territories, with its public lands, waters, and iconic cultural and historic sites.”

- National Travel and Tourism Strategy

Table 1

International Travel and Total Exports – U.S.			
Year	Annual Travel & Tourism (Billion)	Annual Total Exports (Billion)	% of Total
2012	\$161.2	\$2,217	7.3%
2011	\$150.9	\$2,127	7.1%
2010	\$137	\$1,854	7.4%
2009	\$119.9	\$1,583	7.6%
2008	\$133.8	\$1,842	7.3%

Source: World Bank, 2014

Table 2

International Travel & Tourism Dominate U.S. Service Exports in 2012		
Service Export Category	Billion U.S. Dollars	% of Service Total
Travel & Tourism	\$161.2	24.6%
Intellectual Property	\$125.5	19.2%
Other Business Services	\$119.9	18.3%
Transport	\$83.6	12.8%
Financial Services	\$76.6	11.7%
Computers & Electr. Products	\$32.1	4.9%
Government Goods & Services	\$24.3	3.7%
Insurance Services	\$16.5	2.5%
Maintenance & Repair Services	\$15.1	2.3%

Source: World Bank, 2014

Figure 1

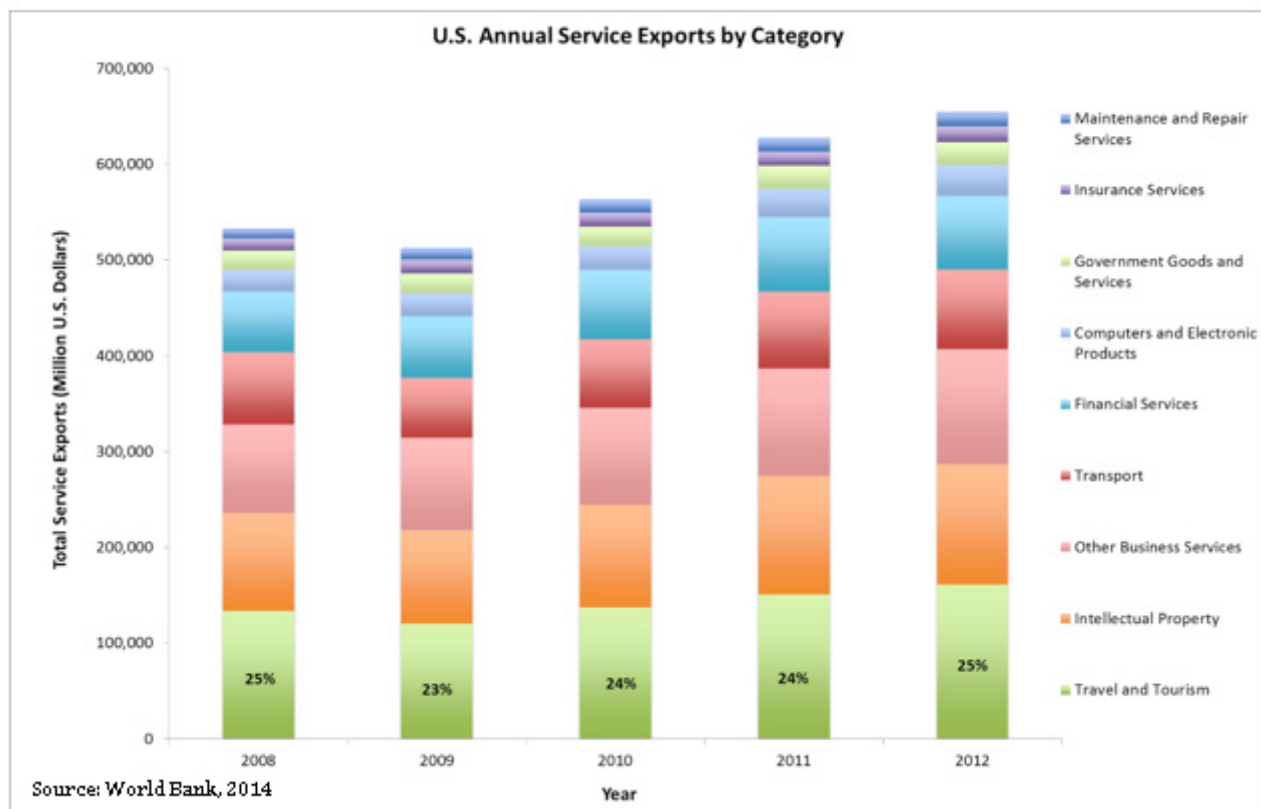


Figure 2

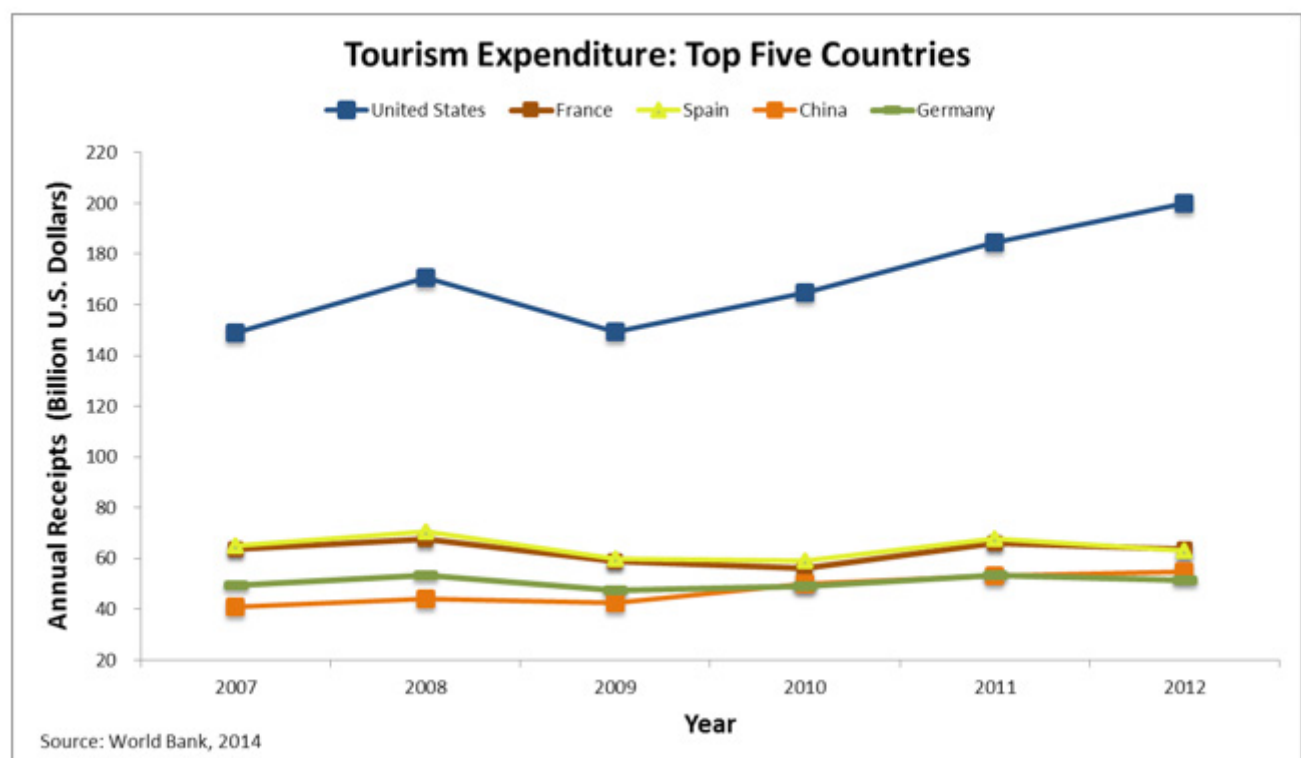


Figure 3

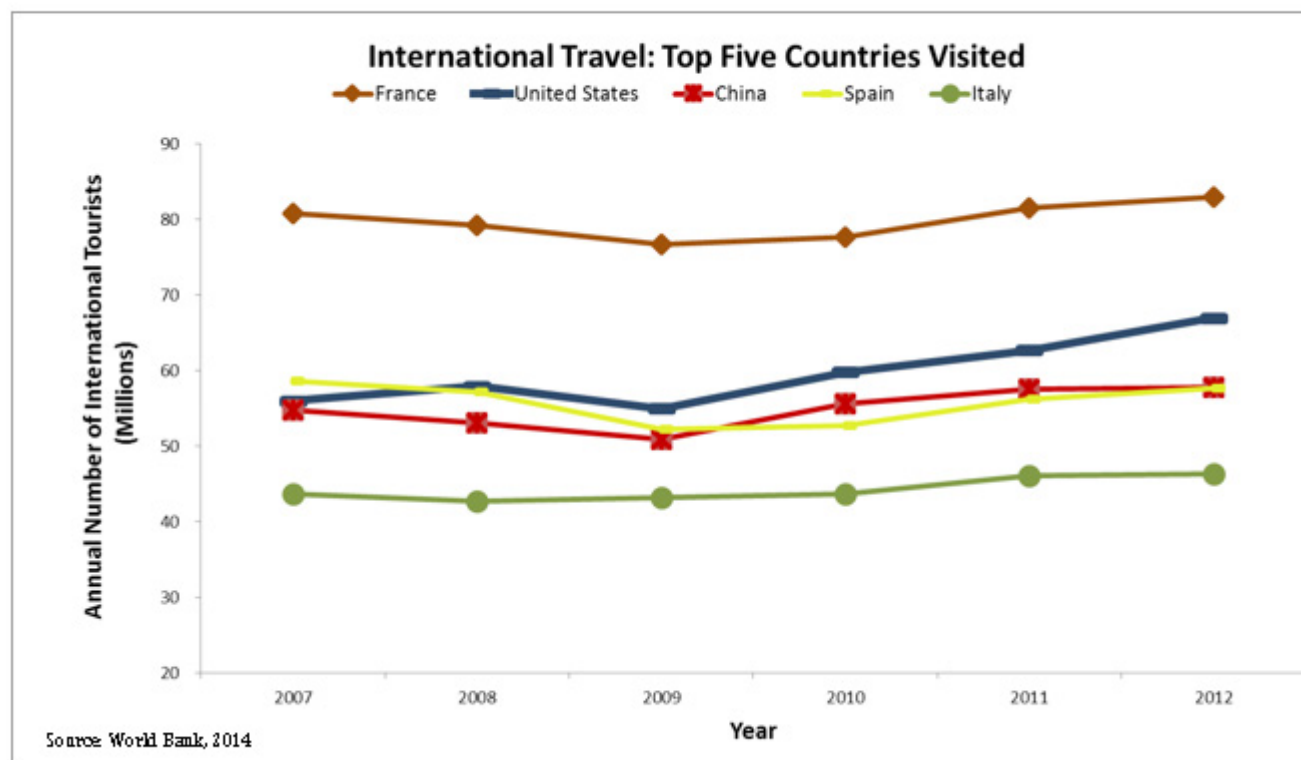


Figure 4

